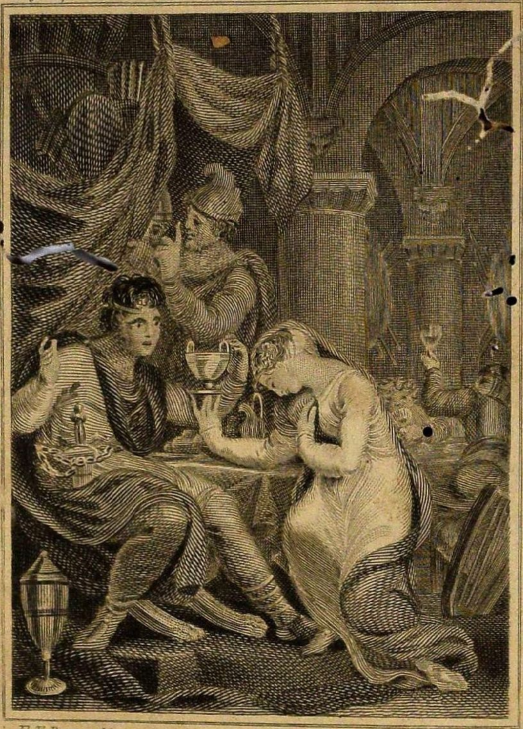

E. F. Burney del. R. Reeve sc.

Vortigern & Rowena.

Publish'd Feb.y 1 1804, by R. Phillips, 71, St. Pauls Church Yard.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY,

ANCIENT AND MODERN;

FROM

THE EARLIEST RECORDS OF TIME,

TO THE

GENERAL PEACE OF 1802.

IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

BY WILLIAM MAVOR, LL.D.

VICAR OF HURLEY IN BERKSHIRE, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE EARL OF DUMFRIES.

Factorum est copia nobis.

. . . .

Res gestæ regumque, ducumque, et tristia bella.

VOL. XIX.

OR VOL. X. OF THE MODERN PART.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD PHILLIPS, 71, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;

AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1803.

T. Gillet, Salisbury-square.

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE EARLIEST RECORDS, TO THE PEACE OF 1801.

BY WILLIAM MAVOR, LL.D.

VICAR OF HURLEY IN BERKSHIRE, CHAPLAIN TO THE EARL OF DUMFRIES,

AUTHOR OF THE BRITISH NEPOS, &c. &c.

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1803.

Price 4s. 6d. in boards, or 5s. half-bound.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD ELDON,

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN,

THIS FIRST VOLUME

OF

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

IS,

WITH THE MOST PERFECT RESPECT

AND ESTEEM,

INSCRIBED,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBEDIENT

AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.

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ISLE of ELY
Pt. of FRANCE

THE

HISTORY

OF

ENGLAND.

CHAP. I.

General Description of the Country. The Britons—Romans—Saxons—The Heptarchy.

ENGLAND, including Wales, occupies the southern and by far the most extensive share of the island, called by its primitive inhabitants, *Ynys Prydain*, or the beautiful isle, whence it had the name of Britain among other nations; and it was also called *Ynys Wen*, or white island, which is the origin of the appellation of Albion among the Greeks: and now, in conjunction with Scotland, it constitutes the kingdom of Great Britain. The derivation of the word England is from *Anglen*, a province now subject to Denmark, which furnished a great part of the Saxon adventurers who established themselves in this division of the island.

England being everywhere surrounded by the sea, except where it unites with Scotland, enjoys every natural advantage of commerce and security; yet, before it knew the art of deriving protection from a powerful navy, it was exposed to frequent invasion, and has several times invited the conquest of nations who were more early skilled in maritime affairs. Its general figure is trian-

gular: one extremity points to the north, another to the east, and the third to the west. Of its three sides, the western is not only the longest, but also the most irregular, being indented and broken by various tongues of land and arms of the sea. A straight line drawn from the Land's-end, in Cornwall, to Berwick upon Tweed, will give for the western side 425 miles; the same drawn from Berwick to the South Foreland in Kent, will make the eastern side 345 miles long; and from the South Foreland to the Land's-end will give a line of 340 miles for the southern side. To follow the trendings of the sea, however, would vastly increase those measurements, and render the three sides not less than 1500 miles.

England, viewed as a whole, affords all that beautiful variety which can be found in the most extensive tracts of the globe. In some districts, verdant plains extend as far as the eye can reach, watered by noble streams, and covered with innumerable flocks and herds: in others, the charming vicissitudes of gently ascending hills and winding vales, rich in corn, or waving with woods and dotted with flowery meadows, present the most delightful landscapes that fancy can form. Nor are prospects of a more sublime and romantic kind wanting: lofty mountains, craggy rocks, deep and narrow glens, and foaming torrents, occasionally contrast with barren moors and wide uncultivated heaths. Yet, from the bounties of Nature, aided by the industry of the inhabitants, few countries possess a smaller proportion of land that is incapable of tillage or improvement; though millions of acres still remain unreclaimed, and invite the labours of the plough.

In general, the middle and the southern parts of England possess the most fertile soil and the most cultivated aspect. Towards the north, it rises into mountains, or expands into moors; while the eastern coast, in many places, is either sandy or marshy. To the west, or in the principality of Wales, the whole country is mountainous, intermixed, however, with vales of great fertility and beauty. Another range of hills, sometimes rising to Alpine heights, extends from the borders of Scotland to the very heart of this country, running from north to south, and forming a natural division between the eastern and western sides of the kingdom. Various ranges of less extent or elevation present themselves in different parts; such as the Chiltern hills in Bucks, the Malvern in Worcestershire, the Coteswould in Gloucestershire, and the Wrekin in Shropshire. The county of Cornwall, which is a great promontory, jutting into the Atlantic Ocean, is altogether a rude and hilly tract, containing infinitely more riches in its bowels than on its surface.

There are few countries better watered by rivers than England, and none possesses more numerous shores, in proportion to its extent; though, from the shortness of their courses they have in general to run, few of its streams swell to the magnitude of continental rivers. Those of the northern parts, arising from the middle ridge of hills, have but a short distance to the sea, whichever direction they take. In the midland districts, however, the Trent and the Ouse run a considerable way before their efflux into the sea. The Severn, taking a very circuitous course, flows over a space which renders it deservedly

considered as the second river in England. The Thames, which bears on its bosom the wealth of many nations, is also, in point of length and magnitude, the first river in this country.

The lakes of Westmoreland and Cumberland are more remarkable for their picturesque effect than for their extent. In most other counties they are rare and inconsiderable.

The deep indentings of the coasts, furnish many bays, creeks, and inlets, some of which are capacious and extensive. Beginning in the eastern coast, the Humber is a considerable arm of the sea, into which several rivers pour their tributary streams. The Wash is the next most important inlet on this side: it is broad, but so shallow, that the sands appear at low water. The Thames forms a kind of capacious funnel for the discharge of its waters, between the coasts of Essex and Kent. At the straits of Dover, the island approaches within seven or eight leagues of the continent: farther on, the beautiful Isle of Wight, the harbour of Portsmouth, and Southampton Water, break the regularity of the coast, and furnish much agreeable diversity of situation. Beyond Southampton, there are numerous other bays and inlets in the progress of the coast towards the Land's-end; and in turning this point, St. George's or the Bristol channel opens, which, with the broad æstuary of the Severn, deeply indents the broadest part of the island.

The opposite coast of Wales is broken by various bays and inlets; of which Milford-haven is one of the first in Europe, nor is the deep and large bay of Cardigan unworthy of notice. Beyond this, Anglesea, repelling the waters of the Irish

Irish sea, gives a new direction to the coast, which, running inwards along the shores of Lancashire and Cumberland, receives many broad but shallow streams. Solway firth next succeeds, and together with the Cheviot hills and the Tweed, form something like a natural boundary between England and Scotland.

In regard to climate, England cannot boast of genial suns and balmy zephyrs; yet it is sufficiently temperate to allow the enjoyment of the open air, even in the severest season of the year. The atmosphere, however, as is common in most insular situations, is inclined to chilness, and loaded with vapours, subject to frequent and sudden changes, and more favourable to vegetation than to the health of the inhabitants. No country is clothed with such a beautiful and durable verdure during the spring and summer; but the harvests frequently suffer from tempestuous rains, particularly in the northern districts; and the fruits often fall short of perfect maturity, and therefore seldom arrive at the rich flavour which distinguishes the productions of warmer climes.

To compensate for these disadvantages, however, neither the rigours of winter nor the heats of summer are felt to such a degree as in parallel continental climates; for while the harbours of Holland and Germany are annually locked up with ice, those of England, and even of Scotland, are happily exempted from this inconvenience. It should be observed likewise, that the western side of the kingdom, receiving first an accumulation of clouds from the Atlantic Ocean, which meet with an obstruction in their passage from the central chain of hills, is much more exposed to rain than the eastern; but the latter,

 as

as if Nature was an impartial distributer of her favours, is more frequently involved in fogs and mists. On the whole, however, if we except parts of Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, and Kent, the air is sufficiently salubrious; and instances of longevity occur in every district and every situation, which may vie with the most favoured regions. The modes of living, indeed, co-operating with the density and variability of the atmosphere, produce a long train of nervous complaints, which diminish the enjoyment of existence; but they do not seem to have any very considerable influence on its duration.

Originally the island of Great Britain seems to have been almost wholly overrun with wood, and solely peopled with the inhabitants of the forest. The wolf, the bear, the wild boar, were long the uncontrolled rangers of the woods; but their race has for several generations been totally extinct. Stags, roebucks, and wild cattle, ranged the sylvan scenes, bounded over the hills, or grazed in the meadows, without fear and without annoyance from man; but by degrees the forests were destroyed, in order to make way for cultivation; the marshes were drained; and the wild beasts, driven from their native haunts, gave place to such as were reclaimed and rendered useful auxiliaries to man.

From the continent, however, came our most valuable productions, both animal and vegetable: the former have been improved by long and sedulous care, and are now superior to those of the countries from which they were originally introduced; and if in any respect the latter suffer in competition, it is only from causes not in human power to alter—the air and the climate.

England,

England, now exempted from any formidable wild quadrupeds, has none that can dispute the mastery with man, and but few to annoy him, either in his person or property. The fox, the wild cat, the badger, the marten, the weasel, the otter, the hedgehog, the mole, the rat, and the mouse, are almost the only quadrupeds that remain to disturb us. Of these the rat, small as it is, from its destructive habits, is infinitely the most troublesome. The hare, the rabbit, and the squirrel, are inoffensive and pleasing.

On the other hand, our domestic animals are unrivalled. The English horse has no equal for spirit, strength, and fleetness. The horned cattle have been brought to the highest degree of perfection, both as to size and figure. The different breeds of English sheep are variously distinguished for the delicacy or quantity of their flesh, and the fineness or abundance of their wool. The deer of our parks and forests are of superior beauty; and our dogs, of every species, are deservedly admired for courage, strength, and sagacity.

The vegetable productions of this country, most of which were drawn from other regions, by culture have acquired all the perfection which our climate will allow. Nuts, acorns, crabs, and a few wild berries, were originally all the indigenous articles of food which our woods could boast. To foreign countries, and our own industry, we are indebted for the bread we eat, our best fruits, and our garden vegetables. Horticulture, indeed, has been carried to a height in England, which other nations have in vain attempted to reach. Where Nature fails, art has been most successfully called in to her aid; and the

the fruits of the tropics may now be seen covering the tables of the rich.

The birds that inhabit our groves, and delight the ear with their harmony, are as numerous and as various as in any populous and cultivated country. Wild fowl in some counties are extremely plentiful; and domestic poultry every where abounds.

The seas and rivers of England are stocked with a great variety of beautiful fish. From the deep, thousands derive a subsistence; and policy has lately displayed itself in encouraging the fisheries, as a source of wealth and of power.

The manufactures of England need only be named to be allowed superiority over those of the rest of the globe. Industry, application, a spirit of enterprise, and steadiness of action, characterise the inhabitants of this country, who, according to a late enumeration, may amount to nearly ten millions; but who have achieved more in arms and in arts than double the number in any other nation on earth.

All ancient writers who have treated of the origin of the first inhabitants of Britain, represent them to have been the same people as the Gauls, who are also more extensively recognized in history under the appellation of Celts, and as the first race of men that spread over Europe, the greatest part of which was in their possession, until within about four hundred years of the christian era, when these Gothic tribes began to press to the westward from the shores of the Euxine. The historical memorials of the Britons themselves, corroborate such a statement;

statement; and with the addition of several important particulars, respecting the successive arrivals of different colonies. The first adventurers are said to have been the northern Cimbri; the next, was a colony of Loegyrians from the south division of Gaul, called Aquitania; and the third were the Celts of that part of the continent nearest to Britain, who were called Brython, or men of tumult, synonymous with which they had the well-known appellation of Belgians. These were the three primary settlers of this island, of the same original stock, speaking a common language, with some diversity of dialects, under the same forms of government, the same religion, and sympathizing in the same manners and customs. The temperate regions, to the westward, were explored by them in very remote periods; so that according to some writers, Britain received its first colonies upwards of eleven centuries before the commencement of the christian era. The last of the three colonies before mentioned is supposed to have come over between three and four hundred years before Christ, to have extended themselves through the southern parts of the island, so that after the lapse of some ages they contributed to the population of Ireland, which had originally received some colonies of the Loegyrians, who also had settled in the middle and southern parts of England.

In considering the state of religion and society among the ancient Britons, the first object that arrests the attention, is the system of the bards, the principles of which are clearly identified among the first patriarchs of mankind; and they were

were extended to the farthest regions of India, in common with the western borders of Europe. The bards required that every branch of knowledge, embraced by them, should be committed to memory before their disciples were admitted into their order. What they thus taught was reduced into a peculiar kind of aphorisms, called Triads, from their comprehending three different articles classed together according to characteristic analogy; and these Triads embraced the leading points of theology, morality, science, and history. Solemn meetings took place at certain times, such as at the new and full moon, but more particularly at the four quarters of the year, when the great national assemblies were held, for the promulgation of the traditionary Triads, and for other purposes. These meetings took place within circles of unwrought stones, in the most public and convenient situations, such as the open plains in the county of Wilts, whereon the principal stone circle of the whole island was raised; and of which Avebury, and Silbury Hill, as its appendage, present at this day to our observation some of its vast and wonderful remains.

The institution consisted of three orders, without distinction of sex; namely, the bards, the druids, and the ovates; and to each of these were attached particular pursuits and functions. That order called the bardic was the predominant class, or that into which all the disciples were initiated in the first instance: it was in short the privileged national college of the Britons; for, on being admitted, the members assumed one or the other, as their inclination or interest

interest directed them. To this primary order appertained the perpetuation of the privileges and customs of the system. A bard, by assuming the character of a druid, had to perform the functions of the priesthood; and, as there was a priest, or druid, in every community, and the greatest influence attached to him, his were the functions most sought after. Therefore the bards appeared most conspicuous in this class to strangers; so that ancient writers have generally blended the other two orders in that of the druids. The ovates were such of the bards as devoted themselves to particular arts and sciences: and this was the only character in which they were permitted to hold private meetings; the other classes were obliged to assemble, as they expressed it, in the eye of the light and in the face of the sun. Each of the three orders wore an appropriate dress: that of the bards in general was of sky-blue colour, emblematic of light, or truth, and tranquillity; white, as a mark of purity, appertained to the druids; and the ovates wore green, denoting that the knowledge of terrestrial things was the object of their pursuits.

The fundamental object and principles of the bardic system were the search after truth, and a rigid adherence to justice and peace. They never bore arms, nor engaged in any party disputes; so that eventually they became totally exempted from all political connections; and were employed as heralds in war between different states. So sacred were their persons considered, in the office of mediators, that they passed unmolested through hostile countries, and even appeared in the midst of battle, to arrest the

the arm of slaughter, while they executed their missions. But this state of disinterested virtue was at length the means of procuring to the order the supreme influence in the nation, by the perversion of its original principles: among the Gauls, we learn that the office of arch-druid was established and made permanent, in direct violation of those principles; and the high priest had acquired so great an ascendency, as to struggle successfully against the Roman power for nearly five hundred years. The leading tenets in the bardic religion were these: they believed in the existence of one supreme Being; of whom they reasoned that he could not be material, and that what was not matter, must be God. The soul was considered to be a lapsed intelligence under a total privation of knowledge, or happiness, by its falling to the lowest point of existence. To regain the state of intellect, it had to pass through all the intermediate modes of existence. For such a purpose was this earth created, as well as other innumerable worlds; that is, as means of approximating eternally through varied states of being towards the deity. Farther, that this earth was originally covered with water, which gradually subsiding, land animals arose, of the lowest and least perfect species, thus corresponding in organization with the then capacity of the soul. New orders in the scale of being were successively produced from these, continually improving in form, and augmenting the capacity of intellect, so that, in the course of ages, man ultimately appeared, the most perfect receptacle of the soul on this earth. Then the soul had so augmented its faculties as

to

to be capable of judging between good and evil; consequently it was a state of liberty and of choice. If the soul became attached to evil, it fell again to brutal life, or the state of necessity, to a point corresponding with its turpitude of human existence; and it again transmigrated towards the state of man for a renewed probation. When the soul became attached to good, death was its release to a higher existence, where the loss of memory was done away, so that it then recollected the economy of every former state; thus being made happy, in the knowledge of all animated nature below its then condition. It was conceived that in this world, life was gradually increasing in quantity and perfection; that therefore truth and justice were advancing therewith, so that the bards looked for a period when those attributes should prevail over the principles of evil and devastation; that when the period arrived, man would then make rapid approaches towards the summit of that perfection, which the terrestrial state is susceptible of; and upon the consummation of such an event, the design of this world would be answered, and it would be then destroyed by fire.

Such was the original system of the bards; but, like all other systems of theology, it was corrupted and abused, and particularly in Gaul; the rank weeds of superstition were sown for the sake of power, and they grew luxuriantly in the field originally cultivated to yield more wholesome fruit. Among the first aberrations, may be traced that of the knowledge of the great Huon, or the Supreme Being, who was obscured in the hieroglyphics or emblems of his different attributes, so that the grovelling minds of the multitude

multitude often sought not beyond those representations for the object of worship and adoration. This opened an inlet for a variety of errors more minute; and many superstitions became attached to their periodical solemnities; but more particularly to their rejoicing fires, on the appearance of vegetation in spring, and on the completion of harvest in autumn. Others of less note grew into importance, from the peculiarity of some ceremonies; such as the cutting of the misselto with a golden hook, by the presiding druid; the gathering of the cowslip, and other plants, consecrated to the power of healing. The authority, which the bards assumed, of excommunication, during the purity of the system, was an useful corrective in their discipline; but when the civil government became in some measure coalesced with the order, the sentence then pronounced in the circle was clothed in all the terrors that surround an outlaw, in modern times. Then too, their doctrine of expiation by sacrifice, extended to more awful victims; for all the criminals of the nation were collected together, at the great yearly assemblies; and there, in atoning for their crimes, presented a spectacle to the whole people at once impressive and tremendous.

The civil institutions of the ancient Britons, arose chiefly out of the system just noticed. The leading trait therein, was their division into families or tribes; and from which again originated many of their other customs, as well as political regulations. Every tribe was an independent state, under the patriarchal sway of its elder. But common danger sometimes united several of those states under the command of an

elected

elected leader; and it is recorded, that in three instances, the nominal sovereignty of the whole island thus became vested in a single chief. The individuals of every family participated in its rights, according to their proximity to the head. Property was equally divided among the children of every marriage; or, in default of co-issue, among the first and second degrees of relatives. Kindred extended to the ninth degree in descent and collaterally; and this every person was obliged to prove, to entitle himself to the rights of the community, otherwise he became reduced to the condition of an alien. Each family was amenable for the conduct of its members towards the individuals of another family; and for every crime committed, a fine was levied of the kindred on one side, according to the degrees of relationship, and distributed among the family of the aggrieved.

The Britons were, generally speaking, a pastoral people; however, agriculture was carried on to a considerable extent in some parts of the island, particularly towards the south, where the state of society was more connected and civilized than in the less hospitable regions of the north and west. Their chief support was derived from the produce of their numerous herds, which consisted of kine, sheep, and swine. With respect to the management of their herds and flocks, the Britons had the custom of keeping all that belonged to the whole community together; and each herd of cattle, according to their regulations, amounted to twenty thousand in number; each flock of sheep had six times as many: and they were respectively superintended by about four hundred men, detached for that purpose.

The dress of the persons of high rank consisted of long gowns, and their ornaments were beads of amber and jet strung together, and worn about the head, and wreaths of gold round the neck as badges of honour. The common people were generally clad in skins; but some of the ruder tribes are said to have used no clothing, wearing only rings of iron round their necks and arms. There was a prevailing custom among most of the tribes, of painting themselves with woad, when they went to battle, so as to appear more terrible to their enemies; and some used to delineate the figures of flowers, trees, and animals on their bodies, by infusing the juice of the same plant into incisions made through the skin. They suffered the hair of their heads to grow long; but shaved their beards, excepting the upper lip. Their houses were generally built of wood, and covered with reeds. The towns, or villages, were a confused parcel of such houses, placed at a small distance apart, and, generally speaking, situated in woods, having the avenues defended by slight ramparts of earth, or with the trees that were cut down to clear the ground; but those who dwelt in exposed and hilly situations fortified themselves upon eminences with circular entrenchments of earth.

The only commerce, which the Britons had, was carried on with the neighbouring coast of Gaul; excepting the occasional voyages, said to have been performed by the Phœnicians, to procure the tin found in the extremities of the present Cornwall. The Romans extol them for being simple and upright in their dealings. What they used for current money, consisted of rings

rings and thin plates of iron, or brass, weighed by a certain standard: the iron was of their own production, the brass was imported.

On account of the nature of their constitution, which divided them into small rival states, the Britons were so inured to war, as to be extolled by Cæsar, for their valour and the undaunted bravery with which they went to battle. Other writers describe them as not only warlike, but as delighting in slaughter. Armed lightly, generally with a spear and shield, their mode of fighting was desultory, making impetuous attacks on their enemies in small parties, having their appointed stations, so that one detachment succeeded another, thus relieving the weary with fresh troops, as the occasion demanded. But there was one branch in the art of war, the management of their chariots, wherein their principal strength consisted, which they had carried to wonderful perfection; and which was of so formidable a nature as to throw the Roman army into consternation. It may not be improper to give Cæsar's own description of their skill in this kind of warfare: "They first drive to all parts with their chariots, and throw their darts; and they frequently break the ranks, by the prancing of their steeds, and the noise of the wheels. When they get among the horse, they alight from the chariots and fight on foot; the charioteers, in the mean while, draw off a little from the engagement, and place themselves in such a manner, that if these should be overpowered by the enemy, they may have an easy retreat to the chariots. By these means they manœuvre and act in battle with the rapidity of the cavalry, and the firmness of the infantry. So dexterous are

they in this mode, by continual exercise, that they can stop their horses, in full speed down a steep declivity, can check and turn them in a small compass, run upon the pole, rise upon the harness, and from thence with incredible quickness recover their stations."

Besides these chariots, which carried a certain number of men, they had other sorts, particularly one that was very destructive, being armed with scythes and hooks, and carrying only the driver, who, as opportunities offered, drove in through the broken ranks of the enemy. The horses employed in drawing those vehicles were of small size; and their harness is described as having been splendidly decorated with ornaments.

B. C. 55. Such was the state of Britain, at the time when Cæsar was pursuing his career of glory among the Gauls: and, to oppose whom a very large army of auxiliaries is stated, in the historical memorials of the Britons, to have gone from this island, under the conduct of Caswallon, and his nephews Gwenwynwyn and Gwanar; the former of whom we shall see, in the sequel, raised to a pre-eminent station among his countrymen, and, in opposing the conqueror of the world, his name stands immortalized in history. The Britons having, in the wars carried on by Cæsar in Gaul, considerably assisted his enemies, this gave a specious pretence to his ambitious mind, and he seized with avidity the idea of adding unknown regions, or sort of new world, to the conquests he had made on the continent. Cæsar therefore collected together eighty ships at Calais, on board of which he embarked two legions, with which he appeared on the coast of Britain, and landed

landed near Deal in Kent, in the month of August; and, after a short campaign, obtained the nominal submission of the islanders. After Cæsar had returned to Gaul, the Britons neglecting to send the hostages, which they had stipulated to do, he employed the following winter, in preparing for another more formidable descent on the island; so that early in the succeeding summer he had collected together about eight hundred ships, on board of which he put five legions of infantry, with two thousand cavalry, forming altogether an army of upwards of thirty thousand men. Since the departure of their invader, the British chiefs had not been idle; for, as they anticipated this impending storm, they had alarmed the more distant regions to a sense of common danger; and, as the first effort of their union, Caswallon, the chief of the territory, generally included in the present counties of Essex and Middlesex, was elected by the different states, to the supreme command; a chieftain who had already signalized himself in many wars with his neighbours; and, as before observed, had been over in Gaul. This was the first instance in their history, of the Britons making such an attempt to consolidate their power; and it seems to have awakened considerable jealousy among some of their leaders: and, the otherwise unaccountable plan adopted, of not opposing the landing of the invaders, is attributed to the treachery of a party among them, headed by Avarwy, or Mandubratius, who carried this measure in a counsil previously held. Certain it is, that the Romans landed without the appearance of an enemy; nor did they meet with any, until they had proceeded to the banks of

of the river Stour in Kent. After several severe conflicts, the Britons were a second time compelled to submit to the fortune of Cæsar, and on the terms of peace being concluded, he returned with his army into Gaul.

A. D. 43. About a century afterwards, in the reign of Claudius, the Roman ensigns were again displayed in Britain; the rude inhabitants were broken in several battles by Plautius; and the Cantii, the Atrebates, the Regni, and the Trinobantes, who inhabited the south-east parts of the island, were obliged to submit. The other Britons, under Caractacus, still maintained an obstinate resistance, until that celebrated leader was defeated and taken prisoner on the banks of the Severn, by Ostorius.

A. D. 59. The captivity of Caractacus, however, had not entirely subdued the spirit of the Britons; and Suetonius, who, in the reign of Nero, penetrated into the island of Anglesey, was astonished by the general revolt of a people whom he considered as subdued. Inflamed by the indignant reproaches of Boadicea, the queen of the Iceni, the Britons started to arms. The Romans were obliged to abandon London, already a flourishing colony, and seventy thousand of them were imprisoned and massacred by the exasperated natives. Their fate, however, was soon after avenged by Suetonius in a bloody and decisive battle, in which eighty thousand Britons are supposed to have perished; and Boadicea, rather than submit to the victor, put an end to her life by poison.

A. D. 86. Julius Agricola, who governed Britain, in the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, formed a regular plan for

subduing

subduing the island, and rendering the acquisition useful to the conquerors. To effect this, he carried his victorious arms northwards; pierced the forests and mountains of Caledonia; defeated the barbarians in various encounters; and having fixed a chain of forts between the Friths of Clyde and Forth, he secured the Roman province from the incursions of its ferocious neighbours.

To skill and success in war, Agricola united a knowledge of the arts of peace. He introduced laws and arts among the Britons; taught them to value the conveniencies of life; reconciled them to the Roman language and manners; and endeavoured to render their chains easy. By this conduct, the inhabitants gradually acquiesced under the dominion of their masters.

To secure them from the irruptions of the Caledonians, Adrian built a rampart between the river Tyne, and the Frith of Solway: this was strengthened with new fortifications by Severus; and from the expedition of that emperor, during two hundred years, such a profound tranquillity prevailed in Britain, that little mention is made of the affairs of that island by any historian. The natives disarmed, dispirited, and submissive, had lost even the idea of their former independence.

But when the Roman empire, sunk into luxury and servitude, was assailed by the fierce barbarians of the North, and the emperors were obliged to recal the distant legions to the protection of the capital, that part of Britain too which had long been subject to its sway, and softened by its luxury, found enemies on its frontiers, ready to take advantage of its defenceless situation. The Picts, who were a tribe of the British race driven northwards by the arms of Agrippa,

and the Scotch, who were supposed to have migrated from Ireland, pierced the rampart of Adrian, and extended their ravages over the fairest part of the country. The emperors, no longer capable of detaching troops from the continent to repel them, restored the Britons to their independence; but at the same time informed them, they must look to themselves for defence. Accordingly, the Romans took a final adieu of Britain, after having been masters of the best portion of it nearly four centuries.

A. D. 448. The abject Britons of the south, unaccustomed to the perils of war and the cares of civil government, found themselves incapable of resisting the incursions of their fierce and savage neighbours. The northern walls were again overthrown, and the ferocity of the Picts and Scots was augmented by the helpless condition and submissive behaviour of the vanquished inhabitants. The latter in vain implored the aid of the Romans, in an epistle to Ætius the patrician, which was inscribed the "Groans of the Britons." The tenor of the epistle was suitable to the superscription: "the barbarians," say they, "on the one hand drive us into the sea; the sea on the other throws us back on the barbarians; and we have only the hard choice left us of perishing by the sword or by the waves." The Romans, however, at this time pressed by Attila, were incapable of yielding them any assistance; and the unhappy suitors, reduced to despair, and attending only to the suggestions of their own fears, and to the counsels of Vortigern, the powerful prince of Dumnonium, urgently but rashly invited the protection of the Saxons.

The

The Saxons had been for some time regarded as one of the most warlike tribes of Germany, and had become the terror of the neighbouring nations. They had possessed themselves of the sea coast from the mouth of the Rhine to Jutland; and at this period were commanded by Hengist and Horsa, two brothers, who boasted their divine descent from the god Woden. These leaders received with pleasure an invitation, which was recommended by the hope of fame and plunder; they embarked with about sixteen hundred of their followers, in three vessels, landed near the isle of Thanet, and attacked with confidence and success the northern invaders. A. D. 449.

But it was for themselves alone, and not for their allies, that they had conquered. The fertility of Britain allured five thousand Saxons to join them; and Hengist and Horsa having concluded an alliance with the Scots and Picts, whom they had been invited to resist, turned their arms immediately against those Britons, whom they had engaged to protect.

Despair acting on the romanized Britons, supplied the place of courage; they deposed Vortigern, who had led them into this error, and chose in his stead his son Vortimer. They ventured to meet their perfidious enemies, and, though generally defeated, one action is distinguished by the death of Horsa. His brother Hengist, however, reinforced by his countrymen, still advanced to victory; sparing neither age, nor sex, nor condition; and numbers of the Britons, to escape from his cruelty or avarice, passed over to the continent, where, in the province of Armorica or Brittany, they were received by a people of the same language and manners.

During the struggle for independence, Vortimer had expired; and Ambrosius, who succeeded in the chief command over the Britons, united them in their resistance to the Saxons: yet Hengist maintained his ground; and while he settled his brother Octa in Northumberland, he formed into a kingdom, and bequeathed to his posterity, the counties of Kent, Middlesex, Essex, and part of Surrey. His success allured new swarms from the northern coasts of Germany; the southern Britons gradually receded before the invaders, or submitted to their sway; and Ælla, another Saxon chief, founded the kingdom of the South Saxons, comprising Sussex, and that portion of Surrey which Hengist had not occupied.

The settlement of the West Saxons in Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, and the Isle of Wight, perpetuates the name of Cerdic, and his son Kenric; but it was not till after many a bloody conflict, that these adventurers enjoyed in peace the harvests of their toils. They were opposed by Arthur, prince of the Silures, whose heroic valour suspended the declining fate of his country, and whose name has been celebrated by Taliesin, and the other British bards. Of this prince many fictions are related; yet it appears, from incontestable evidence, that both in personal and mental powers he excelled the generality of the human race.

Reiterated success, and ample scope for more, allured fresh tribes of Saxons to follow in the same track. In 575, Uffa assumed the title of king of the East Angles; in 585 Crida, that of Mercia, and Erkenwint that of the East Saxons; this latter was dismembered from that of Kent, and comprehended Essex, Middlesex, and part of

of Hertfordshire; that of the East Angles, Cambridge, Suffolk, and Norfolk; and Mercia was extended over all the middle counties, from the banks of the Severn to the frontiers of those two kingdoms.

It was not, however, till 547, that the Saxons in Northumberland were able to enlarge their limits; when under Ida, a Saxon prince, who boasted his descent from Woden, they subdued all Northumberland, the bishopric of Durham, and the south-east counties of Scotland. About the same time, a second Ælla, having conquered Lancashire, and the greater part of Yorkshire, received the appellation of king of Deira: these two kingdoms were united in the person of Ethelfrid, grandson of Ida, who married Acca, the daughter of Ælla; and expelling his brother-in-law Edwin, assumed the title of king of Northumberland.

Thus was established, after a violent contest of near a hundred and fifty years, the Heptarchy, or seven Saxon kingdoms, in Britain; under which the whole southern part of the island, except Wales and Cornwall, in a great measure mixed its inhabitants, changed its language, customs, and political institutions. The period of the Heptarchy presents no train of brilliant events, to dignify its history; in order, however, to connect our narrative, we shall give a succinct account of the succession of kings, and of the most remarkable revolutions in each kingdom.

In Kent, Escus succeeded to the dominions, though not to the martial genius of his father Hengist. During his own reign, and that of his son Octa, and his grandson Hermenric, for fifty-four years,

years, the victors languished in peace; but on the accession of Ethelbert their ardour was again revived; and though the new monarch was unsuccessful in his first enterprises, he soon acquired an absolute ascendancy over the minds and councils of his countrymen, by the defeat of the king of Wessex.

Yet the reign of Ethelbert is still more remarkable, for the introduction of the christian religion amongst the Saxon conquerors of Britain. Ethelbert had married Bertha, the daughter of Caribert, king of Paris; the princess had stipulated for the free exercise of her religion; a French bishop had accompanied her to the court of Canterbury; and her influence over Ethelbert confirmed the Roman pontiff, Gregory THE GREAT, in the hopes he had early indulged, of converting the British Saxons.

That prelate, while yet in a private station, had observed in the market-place of Rome some Saxon youth exposed to sale, whom the Roman merchants, in their trading voyages to Britain, had bought of their parents. Struck with their fair complexions, and blooming countenances, he asked to what country they belonged; being told they were Angles, he replied, they ought rather to be denominated angels, and lamented that the prince of darkness should enjoy so fair a prey. Inquiring the name of their province, he was informed it was Deira, a district of Northumberland; "Deiri," exclaimed he, "that is good; they are called to the mercy of God from his anger, *de ira*. But what is the name of the king of that province?" He was told it was Ælla, or Alla: "Alleluia," cried he; "we must endeavour that the praises of God be sung in their country."

Moved

Moved by these allusions, he was making preparations for the perilous attempt, when the esteem of his countrymen raised him to the pontificate, and compelled him to commit the pious design to Augustine, a Roman monk, and forty associates.

A. D. 597.

Hitherto the Saxons had worshipped Woden, whom they believed to be the ancestor of their princes, and regarded as the god of war: they fancied if they obtained the favour of this divinity, by their valour, they should be admitted after death into his hall; and, reposing on couches, should satiate themselves with ale from the skulls of their enemies whom they had slain in battle. But the other northern conquerors of Europe having already imbibed the christian faith, the Saxons could not avoid regarding with veneration a doctrine that acquired the ascendancy over their German brethren. The manners and address of Bertha had improved the favourable prepossession; and when Augustine arrived in Kent, he found his apprehensions agreeably disappointed, and Ethelbert well disposed to listen to his precepts, and to the prospects of eternal joy which he disclosed. "Your words and promises," said Ethelbert, "are fair; but, because they are new and uncertain, I cannot entirely yield to them, and relinquish the principles which I and my ancestors have so long maintained: you are welcome, however, to remain here in peace; and as you have undertaken so long a journey, solely as appears for what you believe to be our advantage, I will supply you with all necessaries, and permit you to deliver your doctrine to my subjects."

Augustine now proceeded to preach the gospel with the warmest zeal to the Kentish Saxons: his self-denial excited their admiration; his proselytes were numerous; and the king himself was soon persuaded to receive the rite of baptism. His conversion as well as his marriage with Bertha, produced a connexion with the French, Italians, and other nations on the continent, and tended to reclaim his subjects from the gross ignorance and barbarism in which the Saxons had been involved. Ethelbert was also a wise legislator, and, after a glorious and beneficial reign of fifty years, he died, lamented and esteemed.

His son and successor, Eadbald, seduced by a passion for his mother-in-law, deserted for some time the christian religion, which permitted not such incestuous marriages; but he was reclaimed by the holy artifice of Laurentius, the successor of Augustine; and returning with his people to christianity, expired after a reign of twenty-two years, leaving two sons, Ermenfrid and Ercombert.

Ercombert, the younger, possessed himself of the throne, and, after reigning twenty-four years, bequeathed it to his son Egbert. To secure the possession of it, Egbert put to death the sons of Ermenfrid; yet this cruel precaution was not sufficient to transmit it peaceably to his issue; and his son Edric was thrust aside by the stronger arm of Lothaire, the brother of Egbert. Edric solicited the assistance of the king of Sussex; and in an obstinate battle Lothaire was slain. The victor enjoyed his fortune but two years; and was succeeded by his brother Widred; but a strong faction invited Cedwalla, king of Wessex, with his brother Mollo, to attack the kingdom.

dom. The invaders were repulsed, Mollo was killed, and, after a reign of thirty-two years, Widred left his crown to his posterity. Eadbert, Ethelbert, and Alric, successively held the reins of government. On the death of the last, the royal family of Kent became extinct, and a variety of rival chiefs urged their pretensions with the sword. Egbert, who first succeeded, reigned but two years; Cuthred, brother to the king of Mercia, six years; Baldred, an illegitimate branch of the royal family, eighteen; and after a turbulent and precarious reign, he was expelled by Egbert, king of Wessex, who, dissolving the Saxon heptarchy, united the several kingdoms under his dominion, by his superior power and address. A. D. 723.

Northumberland was governed by Adelfrid, whose victories over the Scots, the Picts, and the Welsh, spread around the terror of the Saxon name; yet his success in war could not relieve him from the dread of Edwin, whom he had despoiled of the kingdom of Deira. That prince, supported by Redwald, king of the East Angles, suddenly penetrated into Northumberland, and encountering Adelfrid in a battle, deprived him of his crown and life. The vacant throne was immediately filled by Edwin, who was distinguished by his vigour and his justice, above the other princes of the heptarchy. A revolution having proved fatal to his ancient protector, the king of the East Angles, Edwin rejected the crown that was offered him by the victorious rebels, and fixed it on the head of Earpwold, the son of Redwald. This debt of gratitude discharged, his next care was the conversion of his people: he had married Ethelburga, the

daughter of Ethelbert; and that princess, emulating the conduct of her mother Bertha, had persuaded her husband to receive the rite of baptism. The example of Edwin was rapidly followed by his subjects; and he had the satisfaction of perceiving the majority of the Northumbrians had embraced christianity, when he was summoned from the internal regulation to the defence of his kingdom. He perished with his son Osfrid, in a battle with Penda king of Mercia, and Cadwallon king of the Britons, in the 17th year of his reign.

On the death of Edwin, the kingdom of Northumberland was rent by contending princes; after an interval of ten years, it was re-united by Oswald, the son of Adelfrid, who fell like his predecessor in battle, and was succeeded by his brother Oswy. From his death, during a dark and turbulent period of above an hundred years, the throne was successively filled by Egfrid, Alfred, Ofred, Kenred, Osric, Celwulph, Eadbert, Oswolf, Mollo, Ailred, Ethelred, Celwold, Osred the second, and Ethelbert: the majority of these were the victims to the ambition of their rivals, or the seditious spirit of their subjects. After the death of Ethelbert, an universal anarchy prevailed in Northumberland, and the people having, by so many fatal revolutions, lost all attachment to their government and princes, were well prepared to receive Egbert, king of Wessex, for their sovereign.

A. D. 634.

East Anglia had been compelled by the arms of Edwin to acknowledge the authority of Earpwold, the great grandson of Uffa, the founder of the monarchy: in compliance with his protector, Earpwold, he had embraced christianity, but

but was induced to renounce it by the allurements of his wife. His death, like that of most of the Saxon princes, was violent; and the christian religion was restored by Segebert, his successor and half brother. From the reign of Segebert, East Anglia presents nothing worthy of notice, until the accession of Ethelbert, who was treacherously murdered, by Offa king of Mercia, and his state united to that of the latter.

A. D. 792.

The kingdom of Mercia was founded by Crida, and was ruled for some time by his son Wibba. After his death, Ceorl, his kinsman, was raised to the throne by the influence of Ethelbert king of Kent, in prejudice to the rights of the son of Wibba; nor was it until Penda had attained the age of fifty, that the death of Ceorl opened to him the way to the throne of his father, which he filled to the terror of his subjects and his neighbours. Segebert, Esric, and Annas, three kings of East Anglia, perished successively in battle against him; as did also Edwin and Eswald of Northumberland: he was at length defeated and slain by Oswy, brother of Oswald; and his crown devolved on his son Peada, who established the christian religion in Mercia. Peada died a violent death, and was succeeded in order by Wolfhere, by Ethelred, Kendred, Ceolred, and Ethelbald, whose various reigns comprise an unimportant period of about fourscore years.

Ethelbald fell in a popular sedition; and the throne was occupied by his kinsman Offa, more celebrated for his martial talents than his qualities as a man. He reduced to a state of dependence the king of Kent; and wrested from the

king

king of Wessex the counties of Oxford and Glou-cester; but the reputation he had acquired in arms was attainted by his treacherous murder of Ethelbert, king of the East Angles, whom he had invited to Hereford to celebrate his nuptials with his daughter Elfrida, amidst the festivity of the entertainments. The reduction of East Anglia was the reward of the bloody perfidy; yet Offa endeavoured to palliate his guilt by an artful zeal for the catholic church; he made a pilgrimage to Rome, and the better to ingratiate himself with the pontiff, he engaged to support there an English college. In order to raise the income necessary, he laid the tax of a penny on each house worth thirty pence a year; this impost was afterwards levied on all England, and was commonly denominated Peter's pence; and though conferred at first as a gift, was afterwards claimed as a tribute by the holy see. Offa died, after a reign of thirty-nine years; and such was the effect of his liberality to ecclesiastics, that William of Malmesbury declares himself at a loss to determine whether his merits or his crimes preponderated. The transient reign of his son Egfrith produced nothing memorable; and his kinsman and successor Kenulph, after obtaining and abusing a victory over Egbert king of Kent, was himself killed in an insurrection of the East Angles. He left his son Kenelm a minor, who was murdered the same year by his sister Quendrade, who aimed at the government; but she was supplanted by her uncle Ceoluf, who two years after was dethroned by Beornulf. The reign of this usurper, who was not of the royal family, was short and unfortunate: he was defeated by the West

Saxons,

Saxons, and killed by his own subjects. Ludican, his successor, underwent the same fate; and under the tumultuous reign of Wiglaff, the throne of Mercia was finally subverted by Egbert, who was gradually absorbing the heptarchy.

Essex was formed into a kingdom by Erkinwin, but affords scarcely any materials for history. The names of the princes who succeeded the founder, were Sleda, Sebert, Sexted, and Seward, Sigebert the Little, Sigebert the Good, Swithelm, Sigheri, Offa, Selred, Swithred, Sigeric, and Sigered. The christian religion was introduced by Sebert; was renounced by Sexted and Seward; and was re-established by Sigebert the Good; but Sigered, the last of the kings of Essex, being unable to resist the arms of Egbert, his dominions became the prey of the victor.

Sussex was the smallest kingdom of the Saxon heptarchy; and is the least known. It was founded by Ælla; and during the reign of his son Cissa became dependent on Wessex; Adelwalch, one of the successors of Cissa, was slain in battle by Cedwella king of Wessex; his sons were murdered by the conqueror, and the reduction of Sussex was the first step which the West Saxons made, towards acquiring the sole monarchy of England.

The kingdom of Wessex, which finally swallowed up all the other Saxon states, was established with difficulty. Cerdic, its founder, and his son Kenric, encountered, in many doubtful fields, the natives; and confirmed, in obstinate and bloody battles, the martial spirit of their followers. Ceaulin, the son and successor of Kenric, was still more ambitious and enterprising than

A. D. 560. than his predecessors: he acquired part of the counties of Devon and Somerset; but his invasion of his Saxon neighbours provoked a general confederacy, and Ceaulin, who had lost by his haughtiness the affections of his subjects, was expelled from his throne, and died in exile and misery. Cuichelme, and Cuthwin, his sons, governed jointly the kingdom, till the expulsion of the latter, and the death of the former made way for Cealric, to whom succeeded Ceobald, by whose death Kynegils A. D. 611. inherited the crown. This prince embraced christianity, and was succeeded by Kenwalch, after whose death the kingdom was governed by his widow Sexburga for two years; and on her decease, Edwin ascended the throne, but his reign was short, and that of his successor Kenturin inglorious; nor was it until the sceptre passed to Ceodwalla, that the martial glory of the West Saxons revived. Under that prince, however, they subdued the kingdom of Sussex, and ravaged that of Kent: satiate of glory, Ceodwalla retired to Rome, and resigned his crown to Ina, who inherited the military virtues of his predecessor, and added to them the more valuable ones of justice, policy, and prudence. He made war upon the Britons in Somerset, conquered the province, and, with an humanity uncommon in that age, suffered the vanquished to retain their property, and share the legal institutions of the victors. His long reign of thirty-seven years may be regarded as one of the most glorious and most prosperous of the heptarchy: in the decline of his life, he made a pilgrimage to Rome, and, after his return, shut himself up in a cloister, where he died.

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By the will of Ina, his crown descended to Adelard, the brother of his consort; his pretensions were ineffectually disputed by Oswald, who boasted a more immediate descent from Cerdic, the founder of the monarchy; and on the death of Adelard, his cousin Cudred succeeded peaceably to the throne. A. D. 741. The reign of this prince was distinguished by a great victory which he obtained over the king of Mercia at Burford; but his kinsman and successor, Sigebert, neither inherited his virtues nor fortune; and being dethroned by his subjects, Cenulph was crowned in his place. Cenulph triumphed in arms over the Britons, but suffered some diminution of reputation in his expedition against Mercia: he was assassinated by Kynehard the brother of Sigebert; yet Kynehard reaped not the fruits of his crime, but fell a victim to the resentment of the West Saxons; and the vacant throne was occupied by Brithric, who was remotely allied to the house of Cerdic. A. D. 784.

The eyes of the West Saxons, however, were directed towards Egbert, a grandson of Ingild, the brother of Ina, whose early virtues promised to revive the memory of that illustrious monarch. The suspicion of Brithric was awakened by the partiality of his subjects, and Egbert fled from the jealousy of his sovereign to the court of Charlemagne. Here he studied the character and cultivated the friendship of the celebrated emperor of the West; his manners were polished, and his mind improved by the society and conversation of the French; but in exile he was not forgotten by his countrymen. The cruelty and treachery of Brithric and his consort Eadburga,

burga, reverted on their own heads: a poisoned cup, which had been intended by the queen for an obnoxious noble, was fatal to Brithric, who drank part of it, unconscious of its contents. His widow immediately took refuge in France, whence Egbert, by the unanimous voice of his countrymen, was called to fill the throne of Wessex.

A. D. 799. In the long and bloody conflicts of the Saxon princes, Egbert was the sole descendant left, of those who originally subdued Britain, and who enhanced their authority by claiming a pedigree from Woden, the supreme divinity of their ancestors. Yet, though invited by this circumstance to invade his Saxon neighbours, he chose rather to turn his arms against the Britons of Cornwall, whom he defeated in several battles; when he was recalled from improving his victories, in that quarter by the hostile incursion of Bernulf, king of Mercia.

Before the accession of Egbert, the Mercians had very nearly attained the absolute sovereignty in the heptarchy; their authority or their influence was extended over the East Angles, and the kingdoms of Kent and Essex; and they aspired to the dominion of Wessex; but their career was checked by the presence of Egbert, who defeated them with cruel slaughter in Wiltshire. Kent and Essex were the prey of the victor, and Bernulf, king of Mercia, himself perished in an attempt to quell a revolt of the East Angles: his successor Ludican, about two years after, met the same fate; when the Mercians submitted to Egbert, who allowed Wiglaf their countryman to retain the title, while he himself exercised the real powers of sovereignty.

The

The Northumbrians, involved in anarchy, courted the interference of a prince, whose power could restore to them some form of government. Egbert, however, still allowed to Northumberland, as he had done to Mercia and East Anglia, the privilege of electing a viceroy, but whose authority depended on him alone.

Thus, about four hundred years from the first arrival of the Saxons in Britain, the prudence and policy of Egbert united the kingdoms of the heptarchy; but to introduce knowledge and arts amongst their inhabitants was a more arduous task. Christianity had not hitherto banished their ignorance, or softened the ferocity of their manners: credulity and superstition had accompanied the doctrines of Rome; and the reverence towards saints and reliques seems almost to have supplanted the adoration of the Supreme Being. Monastic observances were esteemed more meritorious than the active virtues; and bounty to the church atoned for every violence against society. The sacerdotal habit was the only object of respect: hence the nobility preferred the security and sloth of the cloister to the tumult and glory of war; and the kings, impoverished by the continual benefactions to the church, were neither able to reward valour, nor retained influence to support their government.

A. D. 827.

Another inconvenience attended this corrupt species of christianity: the Saxons were taught by the monks a profound veneration for the holy see; and the blindness and submissive disposition of the people encouraged the successors of St. Peter to advance every day in their encroachments on the independence of the Eng-

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lish church. In the eighth century, Wilfrid, bishop of Lindisferne, the sole prelate of the Northumbrian kingdom, appealed to Rome against the decisions of an English synod, and thus laid the foundation of the papal pretensions, which we shall find in the sequel, were carried to the most disgraceful heights, and submitted to with a patience that almost staggers belief.

CHAP. II.

From the Union of the Kingdoms of the Heptarchy under Egbert, to the Norman Conquest.

A. D. 827-838. THE flattering hopes of peace, which the inhabitants of Britain had entertained, by the union of the kingdoms of the heptarchy, were soon overcast by the appearance of the Danes. The victorious arms of Charlemagne had ravaged Germany; and large bodies of the natives, to elude his arm, had retired to Jutland. From that northern extremity they retaliated on France the evils with which they had been afflicted; and the natives of Jutland, participating in their resentment, concurred in their enterprises. In their predatory excursions they were tempted to

A. D. 787. visit England; and the booty they acquired allured them to frequent descents. After an unsuccessful attempt on Northumberland, they plundered the isle of Shepey. Again they disembarked in Dorsetshire from thirty-five ships; but being encountered at Charmouth by Egbert, they were defeated in a bloody

A. D. 833. battle; and though in a second invasion they were supported by the Britons of Cornwall, they were overthrown with considerable

considerable slaughter at Hengesdown; when the death of Egbert revived their hopes, and prompted them to new efforts.

Ethelwolf, the son and successor of Egbert, was better qualified for a cloister than a throne. The first measure of his reign was to resign to his son Athelstan the provinces of Essex, Kent, and Sussex. The domestic dissensions which this partition was calculated to inspire, was suspended by the terror of the Danes, whose inroads were felt through Hampshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Kent. In their course, they swept away the goods, the cattle, and even the wretched inhabitants; and then retiring to their ships, set sail to some distant quarter, which was not prepared for their reception. Though often repulsed, and sometimes defeated, they could not be expelled; they established themselves in the isle of Thanet and Shepey, from whence they incessantly harassed and ravaged the adjacent coasts. A. D. 838.

Amidst these distractions, the piety of Ethelwolf had impelled him to make a pilgrimage to Rome, whither he carried his fourth son Alfred. In his return, he married Judith, the daughter of the emperor Charles the Bald; but on his landing in England, he met with an opposition he little expected. Athelstan, his eldest son, had paid the debt of nature; and Ethelbald, his second, had formed the project of excluding his father from a throne, for which he was so little qualified. Ethelwolf yielded in a great measure to the pretensions of his son; and retaining the eastern districts of the kingdom, he resigned the western to Ethelbald. Immediately after, he summoned the states of the whole kingdom,

and, with the same facility of disposition, not only granted to the priesthood a perpetual right to tithes, but exempted it from all services and imposts.

A. D. 857. Ethelwolf lived only two years after making this important grant to the church; and by his will he divided England between his two eldest sons, Ethelbald and Ethelbert; the west being assigned to the former, the east to the latter. The reign of Ethelbald was short and licentious; and his death united the whole government in the hands of his brother, who, during five years, governed with justice and prudence, and bequeathed the sceptre to his brother Ethered.

A. D. 866. The valour of Ethered was not able to stem the torrent of adversity: the Danes ravaged East Anglia, penetrated into the kingdom of Northumberland, and seized the city of York. Pressed in the north by Ethered, and his younger brother Alfred, who accompanied him in all his martial enterprises, the enemy directed their march towards Berkshire; and, after being defeated in the open field, sought shelter within the walls of Reading. Thence they infested the country round, and fought with various success the battles of Aston and Basing. In the first the English had the advantage; in the last they were vanquished; and Ethered receiving a wound which proved mortal, transferred his kingdom and the care of its defence to his brother the illustrious Alfred.

A. D. 871. This prince was only twenty-two years of age when he ascended the throne. With his father Ethelwolf he had made the pilgrimage to Rome, as already related

related; and in a second visit to the Roman pontiff, Leo the Third predicted his future greatness. His early education had been neglected, but the recital of some Saxon poems awakened his native genius; and he applied himself with diligence and success to the study of the Latin tongue. From these liberal pursuits, however, he was early recalled by the danger of his country. Scarcely had he buried his brother when he was obliged to take the field, in order to oppose the Danes. At Wilton* he gave battle to the invaders, but in pursuing his advantage too eagerly, he was oppressed by numbers, and was compelled to relinquish the field. He was still however formidable; and though the West Saxons alone followed his standard, he obliged his enemies to conclude a treaty, in which they solemnly swore to evacuate his territories. The oath was taken and violated with equal facility; and Alfred, who had confided in the sacred obligation, was surprised and routed by new swarms of invaders, near Exeter. He collected his scattered forces, fought eight battles in one year, and was probably successful in most, since he compelled the Danes to sue again for peace, on condition of being allowed a settlement in England, and engaging to oppose the entrance of any more of their countrymen. The speedy arrival, however, of another body of Danes evinced their perfidy; the new invaders were joined by the old; and seizing Chippenham, extended their ravages over Wiltshire.

By this unexpected event, the spirits of the

* The real situation of Wilton has been disputed both by antiquaries and historians.

Saxons were broken; and they believed themselves abandoned by Heaven to destruction. Some transported themselves, or sought refuge in the mountains of Wales; others submitted to the conquerors; and Alfred himself was obliged to relinquish the ensigns of royalty; and in the meanest disguises to elude the pursuit of his enemies. For a time he was concealed by a neatherd, who had formerly been intrusted with the care of his cows. In this humiliating situation, it is said that the wife of the neatherd, ignorant of the condition of her royal guest, and observing him one day by the fire-side busy in trimming his arrows, desired him to take care of some cakes that were toasting, while she was employed in other domestic concerns. But Alfred, whose thoughts were differently engaged, forgot the trust; and the good woman, on her return, finding her cakes burnt, rated the king severely, and upbraided him with neglecting what he was ready enough to eat.

Alfred finding that the success of the enemy had made them more remiss, collected some of his retainers. In the centre of a bog, formed by the stagnated waters of the Thone and Parret,* he found two acres of firm ground, and here building himself an habitation, rendered it secure by its fortifications, and still more by the unknown and inaccessible roads which led to it. This place he called Æthelingay, or the Isle of Nobles; and thence he made frequent and unexpected sallies on the Danes, who often felt the vigour of his arms, but knew not from what quarter the blow came.

* In Somersetshire.

In

In this insulated place he was informed that Oddune, earl of Devonshire, had routed and killed Hubba the Dane, who had besieged him in his castle of Kinwith at the mouth of the Tau; and had got possession of the enchanted standard, or *reafen*, so called from containing the figure of a raven, which the Danes believed to have been woven by the three sisters of Hinguar and Hubba, with magical incantations, and to express by the motion of its wings the success of whatever enterprise they meditated.

Animated by this gleam of returning fortune, Alfred left his retreat; but, before he attempted to assemble his subjects in arms, he was determined to explore the state of the enemy. His skill as a harper procured him admission into their camp: he was introduced into the tent of, and played before, their prince Guthrum; and was witness during several days to their supine security. Encouraged by what he observed, he sent private emissaries to the most considerable of his friends, and summoned them to meet him with their retainers, at Brixton, on the borders of Selwood Forest. The English having fatally experienced, that submission had only increased the rapacity and insolence of their conquerors, repaired to the rendezvous with alacrity, and received with shouts of transport a monarch, whom they had fondly loved, and whom they had long concluded to have been dead. Before their ardour could cool, Alfred led them against the Danes. The latter, astonished and dismayed, fled, after a faint resistance: the remnant that had escaped from the field were besieged by the victors in a fortified camp; hunger soon compelled them to implore the clemency of Alfred,

fred, whose prudence converted them from mortal enemies into faithful friends and confederates. He proposed to Guthrum and his followers, to re-people the deserted parts of East-Anglia and Northumberland; but he exacted from them a pledge of their future sincerity, by stipulating that they should embrace christianity. The Danes complied; and Guthrum received, as the adopted son of Alfred, the name of Athelstan.

The success of this expedient seemed to correspond with Alfred's hopes: the greater part of the Danes settled peaceably in their new quarters; the more turbulent procured subsistence by ravaging the coasts of France; and for several years England enjoyed a state of tranquillity. This period Alfred employed in regulating the administration of civil and criminal justice, and of providing for the future defence of the island. He repaired the ruined cities; built castles and fortresses; and established a regular militia. But, sensible that the natural protection of an island must be a navy, he increased the shipping of his kingdom, and trained his subjects to maritime conflicts. His vessels were stationed with such judgment as continually to intercept those of the Danes; and for a long time the inroads of those rapacious pirates were either prevented or repelled.

At length Hastings, the celebrated Danish chief, having exhausted the provinces of France along the Loire and the Seine, appeared off the coast of Kent with 330 sail; where the greater part of the Danes disembarking, seized the fort of Apuldore. Hastings himself, with a fleet of eighty sail, entered the Thames, and fortified Milton in Kent; but, on the first alarm, Alfred had

had flown with a chosen band to the defence of his people; and the invaders were cooped up in their fortifications. Tired of this situation, the Danes of Apuldore attempted to penetrate into the heart of the kingdom; but were followed and defeated by Alfred at Farnham. They fled to their ships; and escaped to Mersey in Essex, where they erected new works for their protection. In a similar enterprise, Hastings had been but little more fortunate; and was glad to find refuge at Bamflete, near the island of Canvey.

From these invaders, the attention of Alfred was soon distracted by a new enemy. Guthrum had expired; and his followers, who had been settled in Northumberland, had embraced piracy. They were repulsed in two successive attempts, on the coasts of Devon and Sussex: several of their ships were taken; and they themselves, discouraged by the difficulties they had met with, returned to the settlements in Northumberland.

The diversion which they had made, enabled Hastings to quit his retreat, and to recommence his ravages; but while he was plundering the open country, his fortifications at Bamflete were stormed by the English, and his wife and two of his sons were made prisoners. These Alfred restored to the Danish chief, on the condition that he should quit the kingdom, to which he readily assented.

Many of the Danes refused, however, to follow Hastings; and having penetrated into the county of Glocester, and being joined by some of the Welsh, they were besieged in their camp at Boddington by Alfred. After having endured the extremities of famine, a small number broke through the lines of the English; but most of them

them being taken, they were tried at Winchester, and hanged as public robbers.

This well-timed severity restored tranquillity to England; not only the East Anglian and Northumberland Danes, but the Welsh acknowledged the authority of Alfred. By prudence, by justice, and by valour, he had now established his sovereignty over all the southern parts of the island, from the English Channel to the frontiers of Scotland; when, in the vigour of his age, and the full strength of his faculties, he expired, after a glorious reign of twenty-nine years and an half, in which he had deservedly attained the appellation of GREAT, and the title of founder of the English monarchy.

The character of Alfred is almost unrivalled in the annals of human nature; so happily were all his virtues tempered together, so justly were they blended, that each prevented the other from exceeding its proper boundaries. He reconciled the severest justice with the gentlest lenity; the brightest capacity and inclination for science, with the most shining talents for action. His civil and his military virtues are almost equally the objects of our admiration; and nature, also, as if desirous that so bright a production of her skill should be set in the fairest light, had bestowed on him every personal grace and accomplishment.

The martial exploits of Alfred give but an imperfect idea of his merit: it is chiefly to be discerned in his civil institutions, many of which still exist. The violence and rapacity of the Danes had subverted all order throughout England; and to provide a remedy for the evils which their licentiousness had occasioned, Alfred

d divided the kingdom into counties: these he subdivided into hundreds, and the hundreds into tithings. Ten householders formed a tithing, who were answerable for each other's conduct, and over whom a headborough was appointed to preside: every man was registered in some tithing; and none could change his habitation without a certificate from the headborough.

In the administration of justice, the headborough summoned his tithing to assist him to decide any trivial difference which occurred among the members. In affairs of greater moment, or in controversies between members of different tithings, the cause was brought before the hundred, which was regularly assembled once in four weeks. In their method of decision we trace the origin of juries; twelve freeholders were chosen, who, together with the presiding magistrates of that division, were sworn to administer impartial justice in the cause submitted to their jurisdiction.

The county court, which met twice a year, and consisted of the freeholders of the county, was superior to that of the hundred, from which it received appeals. The bishop with the aldermen presided in it; the latter originally possessed both the civil and military authority; but Alfred, sensible that this conjunction of power might render the nobility dangerous, appointed a sheriff in each county, who was equal with the aldermen in his judicial function; and whose office it was to guard the rights of the crown from violation, and to levy the fines.

In default of justice in these courts, there lay an appeal to the king in council; and in hearing these,

these, his time must have been entirely engrossed had he not taken care to correct the corruption or ignorance of the lower magistrates, and to instruct his nobility in letters and laws. To guide them in the administration of justice, he framed a code, which, though now lost, served long as the basis of English jurisprudence, and is generally deemed the origin of what is now denominated the common law.

To encourage learning was no less the care of this illustrious prince. The ravages of the Danes had sunk England in such barbarism, that Alfred, on his accession, knew not one person south of the Thames, who could so much as interpret the Latin service; and very few even in the northern parts who had reached that pitch of erudition. To supply this defect, he invited the most celebrated scholars from all parts of Europe; he established schools, and founded, or at least revived, the university of Oxford. But the most effectual expedient was his own example; he usually divided his time into three equal portions; one was employed in exercise, or the refection of the body; another in the dispatch of business; and a third in study and devotion. Sensible of the incapacity of his people for speculative pursuits, he conveyed his morality by apologues, parables, stories, and apophthegms couched in poetry: he translated the Fables of Æsop, the histories of Orosius and Beda, and Boethius on the consolation of philosophy;* nor did he deem it derogatory from his high character of sovereign, legislator, warrior, and politician, thus to lead the way in literary studies.

* According to a manuscript in the Cottonian library, this work was translated while he resided at Woodstock.

To

To fill up the measure of his wise and benevolent cares, he introduced and encouraged manufacturers; he prompted men of activity to engage in navigation and commerce; he appropriated a seventh of his revenue to restore the ruined cities and castles, the palaces, and monasteries; and such was the impression of his sagacity and virtue, that not only his subjects, but foreigners, regarded him as one of the greatest princes who had appeared on the theatre of the world.

Of the two surviving sons of Alfred by his wife Ethelswitha, the daughter of a Mercian earl, Ethelwald the younger inherited his father's passion for letters, and lived a private life; but Edward the elder succeeded to the military talents as well as the throne of Alfred. He asserted his authority in arms against the pretensions of his cousin-german Ethelwald, son of Ethelbert, who was the elder brother of Alfred; and in an action near Bury, the contest was terminated by the death of the pretender. A. D. 901.

Though delivered from this trouble, Edward was not suffered to taste the pleasures of tranquillity: his reign was an incessant but successful struggle against the Northumbrians, the East Angles, and the Danes; he gained two signal victories at Temsford and Maldon; and after a stormy but glorious administration of twenty-four years, his kingdom devolved on Athelstan, his natural son.

The mature age of Athelstan gave him the preference over the legitimate children of Edward; and, amidst storms of civil conflicts and foreign war, he proved himself worthy A. D. 925.

worthy of it. He crushed Alfred, a powerful nobleman, who had conspired against him; he penetrated into Scotland, and extorted the submission of Constantine its king; he reduced to obedience the turbulent Northumbrians; and defeated with considerable slaughter, the Danes and Welsh. Nor was he inattentive to the internal regulations of his kingdom; and the law which he enacted, that a merchant who had made three sea voyages of any length, on his own account, should be admitted to the rank of a thane or gentleman, is a proof of judgment, soaring above the prejudices of the age. He died at Glocester, after a reign of sixteen years, and was succeeded by Edmund his legitimate brother.

A. D. 941. The reign of Edmund was short, and his death violent: he chastised the Northumbrians who had risen again in arms; he conquered Cumberland from the Britons, and conferred it on Malcolm king of Scotland, on condition that he should do him homage for it; but he perished by the hand of Leolf, a notorious robber, whom he had sentenced to banishment, but who presumed to enter the royal apartment. The king commanded him to retire; Leolf refused to obey; and Edmund, naturally choleric, seized him by the hair, when the ruffian gave him a mortal wound with a dagger.

A. D. 946. Edred, the brother and successor of Edmund, employed the first moments of his accession in reducing to obedience the Northumbrian Danes, and in compelling Malcolm king of Scotland to renew his homage for the lands he held in England. Though not destitute of courage, he was an abject slave to superstition;

superstition; he abandoned his conscience to Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury, who had attained the cheap reputation of a saint, by the romantic austerity of his manners, and the legends he invented of his conflicts with the devil.

Supported by this affected character, he gained an absolute ascendancy over Edred, and was placed at the head of the treasury. The austerity which had contributed to his advancement he zealously promoted; and the celibacy of priests becoming a favourite topic at Rome, the pope undertook to make all the clergy in the western world renounce the privilege of marriage. In England he was seconded with ardour by Dunstan, who introduced the reformation into the convents of Glastonbury and Abingdon; but the secular clergy were not inclined tamely to part with the privileges they had enjoyed; and while the minds of the people were violently agitated by these religious controversies, Edred departed this life.

A. D. 955.

The children of Edred were too young to bear the weight of government, and therefore the throne was filled by his nephew Edwy; whose graceful person had prepossessed his subjects in his favour; but he had unfortunately married the beautiful Elgiva, who was within the degrees of affinity prohibited by the canon-law; and the monks were loud on this occasion. Their insolent invectives provoked the resentment of Edwy; but he was soon sensible what dangerous enemies he had created. On the day of his coronation, he had retired from the noisy revelry of the table to taste the pleasures of love with Elgiva; when the imperious Dunstan burst into the apartment, and

with every opprobrious epithet that could be applied to the sex, thrust the queen from her royal consort. To avenge this insult, Edwy accused Dunstan of malversation in the treasury, and banished him the kingdom. But during his absence, his party proceeded to more outrageous acts of violence. Archbishop Odo, with a band of soldiers, seized the queen, burned her face with an hot iron, and forcibly carried her into Ireland. Edwy, incapable of resisting, was obliged to acquiesce in a divorce; and the unhappy Elgiva, attempting to return to the arms of her husband, was seized by the infernal Odo, who, with the malice of a demon, caused her to be hamstrung, of which she expired a few days after at Glocester, in the sharpest torments.

Not yet satiated with this horrible vengeance, the monks encouraged Edgar, the younger brother of Edwy, to aspire to the throne; and soon put him in possession of Mercia, Northumberland, and East Anglia. Dunstan returned to England, to support him with his influence, and was installed in the see of Canterbury. The unhappy Edwy was excommunicated; but his death, which happened soon after, delivered him from monkish persecution, and gave Edgar peaceable possession of the throne.

A. D. 959. The capacity of Edgar was displayed in the fortune of his reign; by his vigorous preparations for war, he enforced peace; and awed equally the foreign and domestic Danes. The neighbouring sovereigns, the king of Scotland, the princes of Wales, of the Isle of Man, of the Orknies, and of Ireland, were reduced to pay him submission; but the chief means by which he preserved internal tranquillity,

quillity, was his assiduous but forced respect to the inhuman and fanatical Dunstan and his kindred monks.

These repaid his politic concessions by the most exaggerated praise; and he has not only been represented by them as a consummate statesman, and a great prince, but as a man of strict virtue, and even a saint. Chastity, however, could not be reckoned among his qualities; for he broke into a convent, carried off by force, and violated Editha, a nun; yet the only punishment which the grateful Dunstan imposed for this crime, was, that he should abstain from wearing his crown for seven years. At Andover, too, Edgar, struck with the beauty of the daughter of a nobleman, in whose house he lodged, unceremoniously demanded of the mother that the young lady might be allowed to pass that very night with him. The mother, well acquainted with his impetuosity, thought it would be easier to deceive than to argue: she therefore directed a waiting-maid named Elflede to steal into the king's bed, after the company had retired to rest. The dawn of light revealed the imposture; but Edgar, well pleased with his companion, was far from resenting the fraud; and Elflede became his favourite mistress, until his criminal marriage with Elfrida.

This lady was daughter and heir of Olgar, earl of Devonshire; and the court of England resounded with the praises of her beauty. Edgar had determined, if he found her charms answerable to report, to marry her; and communicating his intentions to his favourite Athelwold, he deputed him to bring an account of her person. The fidelity of Athelwold was

 vanquished

vanquished by the beauty of Elfrida; and when he returned to his master, he assured him, that Elfrida possessed no charms of superior lustre. He however remarked, that she would be on the whole an advantageous match for him, and might by her birth and riches make him sufficient compensation for her homeliness. Edgar, pleased to establish his favourite's fortune, forwarded his success by a recommendation to the parents of Elfrida, whose hand Athelwold soon obtained.

Envy, which ever pursues the favourite of a king, speedily informed Edgar of the truth. Before he avenged, however, the treachery of Athelwold, he resolved to satisfy himself of his guilt. He told him he intended to visit his castle, and to be introduced to his wife; on which the favourite, incapable of refusing the honour, revealed the whole transaction to Elfrida, and conjured her to disguise that beauty which had seduced him from his fidelity. But the ambitious fair, exasperated at an artifice which had defrauded her of a crown, appeared before Edgar in all her charms, and kindled in his bosom at once the passions of desire and revenge: he repressed, however, his emotions, until he had an opportunity, in hunting, of stabbing Athelwold, and soon after reaped the harvest of his guilt, by marrying his widow.

A. D. 975. The reign of Edgar lasted sixteen years; and he was succeeded by Edward, whom he had by his first marriage with the daughter of earl Ordmer. This prince was anointed and crowned by Dunstan at Kingston, and lived four years after his accession. His death alone was memorable and tragical: though his

his step-mother had opposed his succession, out of favour to her own son Ethelred, he had always showed her marks of regard. In hunting, he was led near Corfe-Castle in Dorsetshire, where she resided; and paying her a visit without attendants, he presented her with the opportunity that she had long wished for. After remounting his horse, he desired some liquor to be brought him; and while he was holding the cup to his mouth, a servant of Elfrida approached, and stabbed him behind. The prince set spurs to his horse, but faint with the loss of blood, he fell from the saddle, and his foot being entangled in the stirrup, he was dragged along until he expired. His youth and innocence procured him the title of Martyr; and the son of Elfrida reaped the advantage of his mother's crime.

A. D. 978.

At the age of eleven, Ethelred was placed on the throne of England; his reign was long and inglorious: the surname of Unready was the reproachful epithet of his weakness. The Danes resumed their ravages; the English were betrayed by the cowardice or incapacity of their leaders; and the force which had been created by the genius of Alfred, dissolved under the feeble administration of Ethelred. A shameful composition was made with Sweyn king of Denmark; the English monarch consented to the disgraceful badge of tribute: and as he was desirous to draw closer his connection with the pirates of the north, he solicited, and received in marriage Emma, sister to Richard the second duke of Normandy, whose family sprang from the Danish adventurer Rollo.

While their sovereign courted the alliance, the English groaned beneath the rapacity and arrogance

gance of the northern invaders. Sensible of the superiority of these hardy warriors, it had been the custom of Athelstan and Edgar to retain in their pay, bodies of Danish troops. These mercenaries, by their arts and valour, had rendered themselves so agreeable to the fair sex, that they debauched the wives and daughters of the English; but what most provoked the inhabitants was, that instead of defending them against invaders, they were ever ready to join the foreign foe. This animosity inspired Ethelred with the resolution of massacring the Danes throughout his dominions. Secret orders were dispatched to commence the execution every where on the same day; and so well were these orders executed, that the rage of the populace, sanctioned by authority, made no distinction between innocence and guilt, and spared neither sex nor age.

A. D. 1002. Nov. 20.

A. D. 1003. This barbarous policy, however, did not long remain unrevenged. Sweyn and his Danes, who wanted but a pretence for invading England, appeared off the western coast, when earl Hugh, a Norman, and governor of Exeter, betrayed that city into their hands: thence they extended their devastations within sight of the walls of London. The calamities of the English were augmented by famine, and they consented to purchase a nominal peace, by the payment of thirty thousand pounds. The Danes received the money without discontinuing their ravages: a second peace, which they sold at the price of forty-eight thousand pounds, was as ill observed; and new contributions continued to be extorted. The English nobility, driven to despair, swore allegiance to Sweyn, and delivered

vered him hostages for their fidelity. Ethelred, equally afraid of the violence of the enemy, and the treachery of his own subjects, fled into Normandy, where he had sent before him Emma, and her two sons, Alfred and Edward.

Scarcely had the king arrived in Normandy before he was informed of the death of Sweyn; when the English prelates and nobles invited him to resume the royal authority. But on his return they soon discovered, that adversity had not corrected his errors: he displayed the same incapacity, indolence, cowardice, and credulity. Canute, the son and successor of Sweyn, and no less terrible than his father, after ravaging the eastern coast, had burst into the counties of Dorset, Wilts, and Somerset. He was opposed by Edmond, the eldest son of Ethelred; but the English soldiers demanded the presence of their sovereign; and being disappointed in that hope, they gradually retired from the camp. Edmond, no longer able to keep the field, set out for London, which he found in confusion, from the death of the king, who had expired, after a reign of thirty-five years. He left two sons by his first marriage, Edmond who succeeded him, and Edwy who was murdered by Canute; and two more by his second marriage, Alfred and Edward, who, with their mother Emma, again sought refuge in Normandy. A. D. 1014.

Edmond, who from his hardy valour obtained the surname of Ironside, was inferior in abilities, only to the difficulties of the time. In two battles he encountered the Danes with skill and courage: but in both he was defeated or betrayed by the enmity or perfidy A. D. 1016.

perfidy of Edric duke of Mercia. He was, however, still formidable: and at Glocester prepared again to dispute the field, when the Danish and English nobility, equally harassed, obliged their kings to submit to a compromise, and to make a partition of the kingdom. Canute reserved to himself the northern part, and relinquished the southern to Edmond. This prince survived the treaty about a month; he was murdered at Oxford by two of his chamberlains, accomplices of Edric, who thereby made way for the succession of Canute the Dane, to the crown of England.

A. D. 1017. Canute immediately resolved to take advantage of the feeble years of Edwin and Edward, the infant sons of Edmond. To cover, however, his injustice under plausible pretences, before he seized their dominions, he summoned a general assembly of the states, in order to fix the succession of the kingdom. He here suborned some nobles to depose, that in the treaty of Glocester, it had been verbally agreed, in case of Edmond's death, to name Canute successor to his dominions, or tutor to his children; and this evidence, supported by the power of Canute, determined the states to vest in him the government of the kingdom. Jealous, however, of the two princes, he sent them abroad to his ally the king of Sweden, whom he desired to free him by their death from all future anxiety. The Swede, too humane to comply with the cruel request, conveyed them to Solomon king of Hungary. The elder died without issue; but Edward the younger married Agatha, the sister-in-law of Solomon, and daughter of the emperor Henry the IId. by whom he had Edgar Atheling, Margaret, afterwards queen of Scotland, and Christina, who became a nun.

Canute no sooner found himself confirmed in the throne, than he put to death the nobles on whom he could not rely; and amongst these was the traitor Edric, who had presumed to reproach him with his services. But if his jealousy was fatal, his justice was impartial. In the distribution of it he made no distinction between the Danes and English; he restored the Saxon customs, and gradually incorporated the victors with the vanquished. Though the distance of the children of Edmond seemed to secure him from their enterprises, he dreaded the pretensions of Alfred and Edward, who were supported by their uncle Richard duke of Normandy. To acquire the friendship of that prince, he paid his addresses to his sister Emma; and the widow of Ethelred consented to bestow her hand on the implacable enemy of her former husband, on condition that the children of their marriage should mount the English throne.

Canute, after repelling the attacks of the king of Sweden, invaded and subdued the kingdom of Norway. At leisure from war, however, he cast his view towards that future existence, which it is so natural for the human mind, whether satiated by prosperity, or disgusted with adversity, to make the object of its attention. But instead of endeavouring to atone for the crimes he had committed by compensation to the injured, it was in a pilgrimage to Rome, in building churches, and endowing monasteries, that his penitence was displayed. One anecdote, however, shews him superior to the adulation, so grateful to little minds: some of his flatterers exclaiming that every thing was possible to him, he ordered his chair to be placed on the sea-shore while

while the tide was rising; and as the waters approached, he commanded them to retire, and to obey the voice of him who was lord of the ocean. But when the sea, still advancing towards him, began to wet his feet, he turned to his courtiers, and remarked to them, that every creature in the universe was feeble and impotent, compared to that Almighty Being in whose hands were all the elements of nature, and who could say to the ocean, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther*."

The last remarkable action of Canute, was his expedition against Malcolm king of Scotland. The latter had refused to acknowledge himself a vassal for Cumberland to the crown of England; but his obstinacy yielded to the appearance of Canute on his frontiers at the head of a formidable army; and his grandson and heir Malcolm, to whom he relinquished Cumberland, submitted to the ceremony of homage.

Four years after this enterprise, Canute expired at Shaftsbury. He had given his daughter in marriage to the English earl Godwin, who had served him with great ability in his war with Sweden. Of his two sons by his first marriage, Sweyn had been crowned king of Norway, and Harold seized the throne of England; while Hardicanute, who was his issue by Emma, was left in possession of the kingdom of Denmark.

A. D. 1035. Though Harold founded his claim to the English throne on the will of his father, who was unwilling to leave a newly conquered kingdom in the hands of so young a

* The scene of this memorable event, is said to have been the beach at Southampton.

prince

prince as Hardicanute; it was a manifest violation of the treaty with the duke of Normandy, [illegible] which England was assigned to the issue of [illegible]e by Emma. While the Danes supported Harold, the English, with earl Godwin, asserted the pretensions of Hardicanute. A civil war was however prevented by a compromise; and it was agreed that Harold should enjoy, together with London, all the provinces north of the Thames; while the possession of the south should remain to Hardicanute; and till that prince could appear to take possession of his dominions, his mother Emma established her authority over her son's share of the partition at Winchester.

Harold, however, was not freed by this treaty from the dread of competitors: the duke of Normandy was a minor; and Alfred and Edward, the sons of Emma by Ethelred, had crossed the sea to visit their mother at Winchester. Thence Alfred was invited by Harold to London; when, at the instigation of the tyrant, the unfortunate prince was attacked near Guildford, had his eyes put out, and died soon after. Alarmed at his fate, Edward and Emma fled to Normandy and Flanders; and Harold seized the dominions which had been assigned to his brother. Providence, however, did not long suffer him to enjoy the fruits of his bloody policy; four years after his accession, he expired, little regretted by his subjects, and distinguished only for his agility in running, by which he had gained the surname of Harefoot.

Before the death of Harold, Hardicanute had assembled a fleet of sixty ships to assert his pretensions in arms: when informed that his brother was no more, he im- A. D. 1039.

mediately set sail for London, where he was received in triumph, and acknowledged king without opposition. To justify himself from participating in the crime of Harold, he invited into England, and entertained with regard, prince Edward; yet when the latter preferred an accusation against Godwin as the accomplice in the murder of his brother Alfred, the king, influenced by a splendid bribe, suffered the accused to vindicate himself by his single oath.

Hardicanute did not long retain the affections of the English; he revived the tax of Danegelt, which consisted of a shilling on every hide of land. In several parts of England, especially at Worcester, the inhabitants resisted this odious tax: they were, however, obliged to submit; and were only delivered by the intemperance of their oppressor from the dread of his vengeance. At the nuptials of a Danish lord, which he had honoured with his presence, Hardicanute expired, and this event once more presented to the English, a favourable opportunity of shaking off the Danish yoke.

A. D. 1041. The descendants of Edmond Ironside, the legitimate heirs to the crown, were at a distance in Hungary; and as all delays might be dangerous, the vacant throne was offered to Edward, the son of Ethelred and Emma. His elevation might have been opposed by Godwin, whose extensive influence in Wessex, rendered him not more formidable than his numerous alliances and tried abilities: he could not forget that Edward had accused him of the murder of Alfred; but he was prevailed on to lay aside his resentment, on condition that the prince should promise to marry his daughter Editha.

To

To this Edward consented, and, supported by the power of the earl of Kent, was crowned king of England.

The popularity which Edward enjoyed on his first accession, was not impaired by his resuming the grants of his immediate predecessors; but his severity towards his mother the queen dowager was more injurious to his reputation. He accused her of neglecting him and his brother, during their adverse fortune; and, stripping her of her treasures, confined her in a monastery at Winchester.

The long residence of Edward in Normandy, had attached him to the manners and language of the natives; who repaired to his court in numbers, and were received with favour. Their influence soon grew disgusting to the English; but above all, it excited the jealousy of Godwin. That powerful nobleman, besides being earl or duke of Wessex, had the counties of Kent and Sussex annexed to his government: his eldest son Sweyn possessed the same authority in the counties of Oxford, Berks, Glocester, and Hereford; and Harold, his second son, was duke of East Anglia, and at the same time governor of Essex. His late reconciliation with Edward was forgotten in fresh injuries: the king had indeed married his daughter; but the amiable qualities of Editha had never won the affection of her husband: it is even pretended that Edward abstained from all commerce of love with her; and such a forbearance, though it obtained for the prince, from the monkish historians, the appellation of Saint and Confessor, could not but be noticed by the high spirited Godwin.

The influence of the Normans, however, was the popular pretence for the disaffection of the duke of Wessex. The insolence of one of the attendants of Stephen, count of Bologne, provoked a tumult at Dover, from which the count himself with difficulty escaped. He complained to Edward; and Godwin, in whose government Dover lay, was ordered by the king to repair thither, and punish the inhabitants. He refused obedience; threw the blame of the riot on the count of Bologne; and under pretence of repressing some disorders on the Welsh frontier, assembled an army, and pressed forward to seize the king at Glocester. While Edward affected to negotiate, he solicited the assistance of Siward, duke of Northumberland, and Leofric, duke of Mercia, two powerful noblemen, jealous of Godwin's greatness. These hastened with their followers to protect their sovereign; who marching to London, summoned a council to judge of the rebellion of Godwin and his sons. Godwin demanded hostages for his safety; but these were refused: and finding himself, from the desertion of his troops, incapable of present resistance, he fled to Flanders, while his son Harold repaired to Ireland.

Though an exile, Godwin was supported by numerous alliances, foreign and domestic. The earl of Flanders permitted him to prepare a fleet in his harbours, with which he sailed for England; and having possessed himself of the Isle of Wight, he was there joined by Harold with a considerable squadron, which that nobleman had collected in Ireland. He now entered the Thames, appeared before London, and proclaimed, that his only object was to obtain justice

tice for himself and his family, and to rescue his country from the tyranny of foreigners. Edward was obliged to hearken to terms of accommodation; a new reconciliation took place; and the most obnoxious of the Normans were banished.

Godwin's death, which happened soon after, while he was sitting at table with the king, devolved his government of Wessex, Sussex, Kent, and Essex, with his office of steward of the household, on his son Harold, who was actuated by an ambition equal to that of his father, and was superior to him in virtue and address. By a modest and gentle demeanor, he softened the hatred of Edward, and gained every day new partisans by his bounty and affability; by the death of Alger, duke of Mercia, and of Siward, duke of Northumberland, he was delivered from two powerful rivals; and to the government of the latter, his brother Tosti succeeded.

Edward, feeling the approach of age and infirmities, and having no issue himself, began to think of appointing a successor to his kingdom. He invited from Hungary his nephew Edward, the only remaining heir of the Saxon line; but that prince expired, soon after his arrival with his children. The youth and inexperience of his son Edgar Atheling, diverted from him the thoughts of Edward, who at last fixed his choice on his kinsman, William of Normandy.

This celebrated prince was natural son of Robert duke of Normandy, by Harlotta, daughter of a tanner in Falaise. The illegitimacy of his birth had not prevented him from being acknowledged by the Normans as their duke;

and his qualities in the field and the cabinet soon became the admiration of his friends, and the terror of his enemies. He had scarcely established tranquillity in his own dominions before he visited England; where he was received in a manner suitable to the reputation he had acquired, and the obligations which Edward owed to his family. On his return he was secretly informed of the intention of the king to adopt him as his successor; and though Edward, fickle and irresolute, afterwards invited the descendants of his brother from Hungary, the death of his nephew, and the inexperience of young Edgar, made him secretly resume his resolution in favour of William. Meanwhile Harold rapidly increased in power and popularity; but in his views on the throne he was embarrassed by his apprehensions for some hostages whom Godwin had given for his good behaviour, and who had been sent into Normandy. Having obtained the king's consent for their release, and ignorant that William was his competitor, he immediately proceeded with a numerous train on his journey to Normany in order to reclaim them. A tempest drove him on the territory of Guy, count of Ponthieu, who detained him as his prisoner. Harold, however, found means to acquaint the duke of Normandy with his situation; and William immediately perceiving the importance of gaining Harold, demanded his liberty of Guy, who delivered the earl into the hands of his rival. William received him with every demonstration of respect; and taking an opportunity of disclosing to him the secret of his pretensions to the crown of England, desired his assistance; and offered him one of his daughters in marriage, as a pledge

a pledge of his confidence. Harold heard him with surprise; but anxious to recover his own liberty, as well as that of his brother and nephew, he feigned a compliance on oath; and was dismissed with all the marks of a mutual regard.

When Harold found himself at liberty, his ambition revived: he continued therefore still to court popularity, and to inflame the hatred of the English to the Normans; and fortune about this time threw two incidents in his way, which served to increase the reputation he had already attained.

Griffith, prince of Wales, had, by his incursions on the western borders, rendered his name terrible to the English. To suppress this dangerous enemy, Harold marched against him in person; and penetrating amidst their mountains, reduced the Welsh to such distress, that to avert their total destruction, they sacrificed their prince, and submitted to the will of the victor.

The other incident was still more honourable to Harold; Tosti his brother had oppressed Northumberland in such a manner that the inhabitants had risen in arms, under Morcar and Edwin, grandsons to the duke of Mercia. Harold advanced with a formidable army to reduce them; but before the signal for battle was given, Morcar, sensible of the generous disposition of his adversary, requested a conference, and represented in such glowing colours the cruelty and rapacity of Tosti, that Harold refused to be the instrument of injustice. He abandoned his brother's cause, and returning to Edward, persuaded him to pardon the Northumbrians, and to transfer the government to Morcar, whose sister he married.

This

This match convinced William, that he could no longer depend on Harold, who now openly aspired to the succession; while Edward, feeble and irresolute, was afraid to declare either for or against him. In this state of uncertainty, he was surprised by death, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of his reign.*

A. D. 1066. On the death of Edward, the last of the Saxon princes, Harold ascended the throne with little difficulty. The English, prepossessed in his favour, exhibited in his elevation the most unequivocal marks of approbation; but the duke of Normandy received the intelligence with open indignation. He sent an embassy to England upbraiding him with his breach of faith, and summoning him to resign the possession of the kingdom. Harold replied to the Norman ambassadors, that the oath he had taken was void, as being extorted by violence; that he had obtained the crown from the unanimous suffrages of the people; and that if the duke made any attempts by force of arms, he was determined that the same moment should put a period to his life and his government.

William, undaunted by this answer, began to reflect that England having enjoyed tranquillity for near fifty years, her inhabitants were unused to arms; that her towns were without fortifications; and that his rival was yet scarcely established on the throne: while, on the contrary, the Normans were at the highest pitch of military glory; that they were impatient of peace and repose, and eager to embark in any enterprise, however daring.

* Edward was the first king of England who pretended to cure the king's evil by his touch, a practice which was continued till the Hanover succession.

No sooner indeed had he proclaimed his intention of attempting the conquest of England, than he found less difficulty in completing his levies, than in rejecting those who were desirous of serving under him. The count of Brittany, with five thousand of his subjects, marched beneath his banner; the counts of Anjou and Flanders encouraged their vassals to engage in the expedition; while the emperor Henry the fourth promised to guarantee his Norman dominion, during his expedition.

But in that superstitious age, the most important ally that William gained, was the Roman pontiff Alexander II, who, in consequence of the duke of Normandy's application, pronounced Harold a perjured usurper; and sanctioned the pretensions of William, by the present of a consecrated banner, and a ring which inclosed one of St. Peter's hairs.

A fleet of 3000 vessels was speedily assembled by the duke of Normandy, to transport an army of 60,000 men, which he had selected from the numbers who courted his service. Among these were found the high names of the most illustrious nobles of Normandy, France, Brittany, and Flanders; to whom William held up the spoils of England as the prize of their valour.

Though Harold could not be ignorant of the preparations of William, it was the invasion of his brother Tosti that first summoned him to the field. That haughty nobleman had fled to Flanders; and thence, in concert with Helfager king of Norway, determined to invade England, out of resentment for being stripped of the government of Northumberland. With sixty sail he joined in the Humber the Norwegian fleet, which

which consisted of three hundred vessels; and defeated Morcar, earl of Northumberland, and, Edwin earl of Mercia, who had ventured to give him battle.

Harold was no sooner apprised of the danger, than he rapidly advanced to encounter the invaders; and at Standford he engaged the enemy. His victory was decisive; both Helfager and Tosti perished in the action; and the Norwegian fleet fell into the hands of the conqueror.

Scarcely had he time, however, to rejoice in his success, before he was informed that the duke of Normandy was landed with a great army in the south of England. Misled by uncertain rumours that William had laid aside his preparations, Harold had dismissed his fleet, and the Normans, without meeting any obstacle, landed at Pevensey in Sussex. The duke himself, as he leaped on shore, happened to stumble, and fell; but had the presence of mind to turn the omen to his advantage, by calling aloud, that he had now taken possession of the country.

The victory which Harold had obtained at Standford, may be regarded as the immediate cause of his ruin: he had lost in the action many of his best officers, and bravest soldiers; and the reinforcements he drew from London, ill supplied the place of these veterans. He hastened, however, by forced marches to meet his rival: nor would he listen to the counsels of his brother Gurth, a man of bravery and conduct, who advised him to content himself with harassing the enemy, who, during the distress of a winter campaign, would probably offer to them an easy and bloodless victory.

Harold,

Harold, consulting only the dictates of his courage, was deaf to all his remonstrances; and impatient of the event, soon appeared in sight of the enemy, who had pitched their camp at Hastings. So confident did he seem of success that his only offer to William was a sum of money, if he would quit the kingdom; the duke of Normandy in return required him to resign the crown, or to hold it of him in fealty, or to submit their cause to the pope, or to the chance of single combat: That the god of battle should soon be the arbiter of all their differences, was the final reply of Harold.

A. D. 1066. Oct. 14.

Both parties immediately prepared for action: but the English spent the night previous to it, in riot and jollity; while the Normans were occupied in the duties of religion. On the morning the duke called together his principal officers; and in a set harangue, made use of every argument which could stimulate their courage and repel their fears. He then ordered the signal of battle to be given; and the whole army, moving at once, and singing the hymn or song of Roland, advanced in order and with alacrity towards the English.

Harold had seized the advantage of a rising ground, and having secured his flanks with trenches, resolved to stand upon the defensive, and to avoid an engagement with the cavalry, in which he was inferior. The Kentish men were placed in the van, a post of honour which they always claimed as their due. The Londoners guarded the standard; and the king himself, accompanied by his two valiant brothers Gurth and Leofwin, dismounting from his

his horse, placed himself at the head of his infantry, and expressed his resolution to conquer or to die. The first attack of the Normans was desperate, but was received with equal valour by the English; and the former began to retreat, when William hastened to their support with a select band. His presence restored the action, and the English in their turn were obliged to retire. They rallied again, however, assisted by the advantage of the ground; and William, in order to gain the victory, had recourse to a stratagem which, had it failed, must have ended in his total ruin. He commanded his troops to allure the enemy from their position, by the appearance of flight. The English followed with precipitation: the Normans faced upon them in the plain, and drove them back with considerable slaughter. The artifice was a second time repeated with the same success; yet a great body of the English still maintained themselves in firm array, and seemed determined to dispute the victory. While they were galled by the Norman archers behind, they were attacked by the heavy armed infantry in front; and Harold himself was slain by an arrow, as he combated with great bravery at the head of his men. His two brothers shared the same fate. The English, discouraged by the fall of their princes, fled on all sides; and the darkness of the night contributed to save those who had survived the carnage of the battle.

The obstinacy, indeed, with which the English had maintained the conflict from morning to sunset, is proved by the loss of the victors: fifteen thousand Normans fell; and William in the action had three horses killed under him.

But

But the victory, however dearly purchased, was decisive, as it paid the price of a kingdom. The body of Harold was brought to William, who generously restored it without ransom to his mother; and no sooner had the Normans returned thanks to heaven for their success, than their prince pressed forwards, to secure the prize he had won.

CHAP. III.

The Reigns of William the Conqueror, William Rufus, Henry I. and Stephen.

A. D. 1006. IN the disastrous field of Hastings, the strength of England had been broken; and the death of the king, with the slaughter of his bravest warriors, had overwhelmed the nation with dismay. Edgar Atheling, the only heir of the Saxon line, had been considered as unfit to govern, even in times of order and tranquillity; and though the potent earls, Edwin and Morcar, who fled with the remains of the vanquished army to London, had caused him to be proclaimed, they soon found it was impossible to arm the people in his support.

After possessing himself of Dover, William rapidly advanced towards the capital to improve his victory; his enterprise avowed and hallowed by the pope, was insisted on as a reason for general submission; and the repulse which a body of Londoners received from five hundred Norman horse renewed the terror of the citizens. Edgar and Morcar had retired with their troops into their own provinces; and the people seeing no other alternative, unanimously disposed themselves to yield to the conqueror. Before William, however, came in sight of London, all the chief nobility, and Edgar Atheling himself, entered his camp, and requested him to mount the throne, declaring, as they had always been ruled by regal power, they desired to follow

follow, in this instance, the example of their ancestors, and knew of no one more worthy than himself to hold the reins of government.

Though William feigned to hesitate, and wished to obtain a more formal consent of the English nation, he dreaded the danger of delay, and accepted of the crown which was thus tendered him. In Westminster Abbey he was consecrated by Aldred, archbishop of York. The most considerable of the nobility, both English and Norman, attended him on this occasion; and though Edwin and Morcar were not present at the ceremony, they soon after submitted, swore fealty to their new sovereign, and were confirmed in the possession of their estates and dignities.

Thus by a pretended destination of king Edward, by the sanction of the pope, by an irregular election of the people, but still more by force of arms, William seated himself on the English throne.* He gratified his followers by the

* At the time of the Norman conquest, the Saxon laws and language had supplanted those of the Britons, and all the institutions of England partook of their German original. The inhabitants breathed a fierce spirit of independence; and the king was regarded as little more than the first among the citizens. The law of hereditary succession was so far observed as to confine the crown to one family, but the right of primogeniture, or direct descent, was by no means an invariable rule. In short, the monarchy, strictly speaking, was neither hereditary nor elective; but in some measure partook of the nature of both.

The Wittenagemot or assembly of wise men, whose assent was necessary on every important occasion, still farther limited the power of the monarch. This assembly appears to have been composed of the bishops, abbots, and the aldermen or governors of counties, called afterwards earls,

distribution of the treasures of Harold; and by the most liberal donations to churches and monasteries, he expressed his gratitude to the ecclesiastical order, who, influenced by the pope, had embraced his party with zeal. He introduced into England that strict execution of justice, for which his administration had been celebrated in Normandy; he restrained by severe discipline

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the judges, and principal proprietors of lands. What influence the boroughs might have at this period is little known, nor has it been ascertained whether they were allowed representatives in their corporate capacity.

But with every check that had hitherto been devised, it is necessary to suppose, that oppression and violence must have prevailed among a martial and turbulent people. The reign of the laws was not yet sufficiently established to ensure justice; and therefore the weak and the defenceless generally sought security by devoting themselves to the service of some chieftain, or the clientship of some particular noble. Others again, in the middle ranks of life, united into confederacies for their mutual protection, and thus the want of strength in the civil union was supplied by private engagements.

The Anglo Saxons may be considered as constituting three ranks of men: the nobles, the free, and the slaves. The nobles were called thanes, and were divided into the king's thanes and the lesser thanes. Noble birth and extensive possessions were long necessary to give the rank of thane; but two statutes of Athelstan seem to have been made on purpose to stimulate the ambition of rising to this envied distinction. The first decreed that any merchant who made three voyages on his own account, should be entitled to the quality of thane; the second conferred this honour on any husbandman, who had been able to purchase five hides of land, and had a chapel, a kitchen, a hall, and a bell.

Untitled freemen were denominated Ceorles among the Saxons. These were chiefly employed in husbandry, and cultivated the farms of the nobility, either for hire, or at a certain rent.

By

the insolence of his troops; he appeared solicitous to unite the Normans and the English by intermarriages and alliances; he confirmed the liberties and communities of London, and the other cities of England; and seemed desirous of replacing every thing on the ancient establishment. But amidst this apparent confidence, he built citadels in London, Winchester, Hereford, Ox-

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By far the most numerous ranks, however, in the community, were the *villains* or slaves, who were the property of their lords, and consequently incapable of holding any possessions themselves. To meliorate the unhappy condition of these men, several humane regulations were established: if a lord beat out his slave's eyes or teeth, that slave recovered his liberty; and if he killed him, he was amerced in a fine to the king.

The great lords and abbots possessed a criminal jurisdiction within their territories, and could punish or protect without appeal. This apparently irregular and dangerous power was in some measure restrained by the established administration of justice, by the courts of decennary, the hundred, and the county. In the Anglo Saxon courts, the accused was allowed to clear himself by his own oath, and the concurring oaths of his friends. These were called compurgators; and sometimes amounted to three hundred. The practices also of single combat, and of the ordeal, were allowed in doubtful cases; and absurd as they may appear, the result was deemed complete evidence, for or against the accused or suspected person.

The punishment of crimes was not less singular than the general proofs of guilt. A fine was the customary mode of commuting the punishment of the blackest offences; and as fines were a source of revenue, they were fixed with the nicest care on a graduated scale, corresponding to the magnitude of the crime. Thus, a wound of an inch long, under the hair, was compounded for with one shilling; a wound of the like size in the face, with two shillings; and thirty shillings was the compensation for the loss of an ear; and so on in proportion.

ford, and the towns best situated for commanding the kingdom, and trusted to the sword rather than to a submission which he knew to be constrained.

By this mixture of vigour and lenity, he had so soothed or humbled the minds of the English, that he thought he might safely revisit his native country, and enjoy the congratulations of his ancient subjects. Accordingly he set out for Normandy, leaving the administration in the

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The Saxon pound, as likewise that which was coined for some centuries after the conquest, was near three times the weight of our present money. There were forty-eight shillings in the pound, and a Saxon shilling was nearly a fifth heavier than ours. By the laws of Athelstan, a sheep was valued at a shilling or fifteen pence of our money: an ox was computed at six times the value of a sheep; and a cow at four. A horse was valued at thirty-six shillings of our money, and a mare at twenty-four. Between the years 900 and 1000, a hide of land was purchased for about one hundred and eighteen shillings, which is little more than a shilling per acre. On the whole, when we combine the alteration in the weight of the pound, and in the modern value of the precious metals from their greater plenty, we may conceive every sum of money mentioned by historians, during the Anglo Saxon, and even the Norman times, as if it were multiplied more than an hundred fold above a sum of the same denomination at present.

The royal revenue seems to have arisen from large demesnes, from tolls and imposts, fines and forfeitures. There was likewise a tax of one shilling on every hide of land called Danegelt, which appears to have been levied for the defence of the kingdom against the Danish marauders.

In addition to this, it was usual for every five hides of land to equip a man for the service; and as there were computed to be 243,600 hides of land in England, the ordinary military force of the kingdom consisted of 48,720 men, though no doubt this was doubled on extraordinary emergencies.

hands

hands of his uterine brother Odo, bishop of Baieux, and of William Fitz-Osborne; and, that their authority might be less exposed to danger, he carried over with him the chief of the English nobles, who, while they served to grace his court by their magnificence, were in reality hostages for the fidelity of the nation.

During the absence of William, affairs took a very unfavourable turn in England. It is probable, the Normans, despising a people who had so easily submitted to the yoke, and envying their riches, were desirous of provoking them to rebellion. Be this as it may, their arrogance certainly multiplied discontents and complaints every where; and secret conspiracies were entered into against the government. The inhabitants of Kent, who had first submitted to the conqueror, were the first that attempted to throw off his yoke, and, encouraged by Eustace count of Boulogne, who had been also disgusted by the Normans, made an unsuccessful attempt on Dover. Edric, the forester, whose possessions lay on the banks of the Severn, provoked at the depredations of some Norman captains in his neighbourhood, formed an alliance with Blethyn and Rowallen, two Welsh princes, and endeavoured to repel force by force. The disaffection of the English daily increased; a secret project was entertained to perpetuate a massacre of the Normans, like that which had been formerly executed upon the Danes; and the animosity became so general and natural, that the vassals of earl Coxo having desired him to head them in an insurrection, and finding him resolute in maintaining his fidelity to William, put him to death, as a traitor to his country.

The

The return of the king, however, disconcerted the plans of the conspirators; and the confiscation of their estates still farther enriched the Normans. Though highly irritated against the English, William still preserved the appearance of justice in his oppressions; he restored to their inheritance such as had been arbitrarily expelled, during his absence; but he seized this opportunity of imposing the tax of Danegelt on the people, under pretence of being thereby better able to defend them.

This tax rendered his government more odious: the inhabitants of Exeter rose in arms; the people of Devonshire and Cornwall followed their example; but Exeter was terrified into submission by the presence of William himself. A citadel was erected to restrain in future their levity; and Devonshire and Cornwall had implored the clemency of the sovereign, when a new and more formidable insurrection in the north excited the general attention, and seemed to threaten more important consequences. At the head of this were Edwin and Morcar, encouraged by the assurance of support from their nephew Blethyn prince of North Wales, from Malcolm king of Scotland, and from Sweyn king of Denmark. The breast of Edwin was inflamed with private as well as public wrongs, and he accused William of having broken his promise, of bestowing on him his daughter in marriage. Before the earls, however, could concert their measures, or receive the foreign succours they expected, they were surprised by the vigilance of the king. As they were incapable of resistance, they condescended to sue for mercy; but though William pardoned the chiefs, he

he seized and bestowed on his Norman adherents the lands of their followers; and the numerous colonies of foreigners, which he established in the north, left the Saxons in that quarter destitute of any real power.

The English now clearly foresaw that the king was determined to rely on the support and affection of foreigners, and that new forfeitures would be the result of every attempt to support their rights. Impressed with this dismal prospect, many fled into foreign countries: Edgar Atheling himself, dreading the insidious caresses of William, escaped with his sisters Margaret * and Christine into Scotland. A few, however, still hoped to acquire security from arms: from their retreat in Ireland, Godwin, Edmond, and Magnus, three sons of Harold, passed into England, and landed in Devonshire; but were repulsed and obliged to return, by Brien son of the count of Brittany. In the north, the inhabitants of Northumberland and York threw off their allegiance, and killed their foreign governors; these insurgents were strengthened by a large body of forces from Denmark, and were animated by the presence of Edgar Atheling, who quitted Scotland to place himself at their head. Hereward, a nobleman of East Anglia, celebrated for his valour, assembled his followers, and taking shelter in the Isle of Ely, made frequent inroads on the neighbouring country; while Edric, the forester, calling in the assistance of the Welsh, laid siege to Shrewsbury.

* Malcolm king of Scotland espoused Margaret, and by the succession of James VI. to the English throne, the Saxon line was restored.

This

This general commotion was however hushed by the policy and vigour of William, who inflamed his followers by the promise of new forfeitures, purchased the retreat of the Danes, and reduced to obedience Northumberland and York. Edgar Atheling again sought refuge in Scotland; Edric implored the clemency of the conqueror, and was once more received into favour; and Hereward alone, confiding in the advantages of his situation, scorned to make a submission.

Though William still preserved the language of clemency and forgiveness towards the chiefs, his heart was hardened against the people. To chastise the turbulence of the Northumbrians, he laid waste that fertile country between the Humber and the Tees, and the lives of an hundred thousand persons are computed to have been sacrificed, by this barbarous stroke of policy. Taking advantage of the imprudence with which the bulk of the landed property had engaged in these insurrections, he involved the proprietors in confiscation: their estates were transferred to the Normans; and the most ancient and honourable English families were reduced to beggary; while every path which led to riches or preferment was carefully shut against them.

The feudal law, which had some time been established in Normandy and France, William introduced into England. He divided, with very few exceptions, besides the royal demesnes, the lands of that country into baronies; and conferred them, with the reservation of stated services and payments, on the most considerable of his adventurers. These barons made grants of a great part of their lands to other foreigners, under

under the denomination of knights or vassals, who paid their lords the same duty and submission in peace and war, which the chieftain paid to his sovereign. The whole kingdom contained about 700 chief tenants, and 60,215 knights fees; and as none of the native English were admitted into the first rank, the few who retained their landed property, were glad to be received into the second, under the protection of some powerful Norman.

The doctrine which exalted the papacy above all human power, had gradually diffused itself from Rome; but at this time, was more prevalent in the southern, than in the northern kingdoms of Europe. Pope Alexander, who had assisted William in his conquests, naturally expected that he would extend to England the reverence for this sacred character, and break the spiritual independence of the Saxons. As soon, therefore, as the Norman prince was established on the throne, Alexander dispatched to him Esmenfroy, bishop of Sion, as his legate; and the king, though he was probably led by principle to pay respect to Rome, embraced the opportunity to degrade those English prelates, who were obnoxious to him. In a council of the principal ecclesiastics, he deposed every native dignitary, and supplied their place with foreigners, among whom Lanfranc, a Milanese monk, celebrated for his learning and piety, and zealous in promoting the interests of the papacy, was preferred to the see of Canterbury.

The superstitious spirit however, which became dangerous to some of William's successors, was checked by the abilities of that monarch: he prohibited his subjects from acknow-

ledging

ledging any one for pope whom he himself had not previously received; nor would he suffer any letters or bills from Rome to be produced without the sanction of his authority. But he was still more vigilant to humble the English: he even formed a project of extinguishing the English language; and ordered that in all schools youth should be instructed in the French tongue; and that all law proceedings should be directed in the same idiom; whence arises that mixture of French which is at present found in the English tongue, and particularly in legal forms.

The situation of the two great earls Edwin and Morcar became daily more disagreeable. Sensible that they had entirely lost their dignity, they determined to attempt its recovery by force. While Edwin retired to his estate in the north, with a view of commencing an insurrection, Morcar took shelter in Ely with the brave Hereward. To subdue that Isle, William surrounded it with flat-bottomed boats, and made a causeway through the morasses to the extent of two miles. The rebels surrendered at discretion; Hereward alone forced his way sword in hand through the enemy, and continued his hostilities at sea, till William, admiring his bravery, received him into favour. Morcar was thrown into prison; Edwin was killed in attempting to escape; and Edgar Atheling, weary of a fugitive life, submitted to the conqueror, and obtained a decent pension for life, with the liberty of residing in England.

A. D. 1073. Scarcely, however, had William settled the insurrections of the native lords, when some of the most powerful Norman barons associated in arms, provoked by the arrogance

gance of their master. Of these the chief were Roger earl of Hereford, and Ralph de Gueder earl of Norfolk; and earl Waltheof, the last of the English who for some generations possessed any power, and who had married Judith the niece of William, rashly joined in the league; but on reflection, dreaded the effects of the enterprise in which he was engaged. Distracted and irresolute, he imparted the project and his doubts to his wife Judith, who having conceived an impure passion for another, conveyed in exaggerated terms the particulars of the conspiracy to her uncle.

Waltheof, in the mean time, had made a full confession of the secret to Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, who urged him to make atonement for his guilt, by acknowledging it. He accordingly passed over to Normandy, and laid open the whole design to the king. The conspirators, informed of his departure, immediately flew to arms; but before the arrival of the Danes, on whose assistance they had depended, they were defeated and dispersed. The earl of Norfolk retired in despair to Brittany, where he possessed a considerable estate: the property of the earl of Hereford was forfeited, and he himself imprisoned during life. Waltheof obtained not the pardon he had been promised, and which his repentance merited; for William, instigated by the unnatural Judith, ordered him to be tried, condemned, and executed; and the English, who considered him as the last resource of their nation, not only lamented his fate, but fancied miracles were wrought by his reliques.

The papal see at this time began to extend its encroachments; and even the haughty and potent

tent William was required to perform homage, and remit the tribute that was due to the vicar of Christ. By the tribute was meant Peter's pence, which though at first a voluntary donation of the Saxon princes, had been construed into a badge of subjection. William replied, that the money should be remitted as usual; but neither had he promised to do homage to Rome, nor was it in the least his purpose to impose that servitude on his state.

From ecclesiastical affairs however, his attention was recalled to civil. His eldest son, Robert, greedy of fame, impatient of contradiction, and without reserve in his friendships or enmities, had been flattered with the hope, that his father, in possession of England, would resign to him the independent administration of his dominions on the continent. Disappointed in this expectation, he cherished a violent jealousy against his younger surviving brothers William and Henry; and, irritated by an imaginary affront, he quitted the court, and after a vain attempt to surprise the citadel of Rouen, fled to Hugh de Neufchatelle, a powerful Norman baron, and openly levied war against his father. After a struggle of several years, he was besieged in the castle of Gerberoy, in the Beauvoisin. In one of the rencounters beneath the walls, Robert happened to engage the king, who was concealed by his helmet, and both of them being resolute, a fierce combat ensued; till at last the young prince wounded his father in the arm, and dismounted him. On his calling out for assistance, his voice discovered him to his son, who, struck with remorse and horror, threw himself at his feet, and implored forgiveness

William

William for the moment was implacable, and with imprecations on his head, hastened to his camp, on Robert's horse, which the prince had assisted him to mount. But the impression of his son's generosity, together with the mediation of the queen, overcame the reluctance of the king, and brought about a reconciliation between him and Robert, who soon after accompanied him to England.

Having now gained a respite from war, William employed the interval in an undertaking which does honour to his memory. He appointed commissioners to survey all the lands in the kingdom; their extent in each district; their proprietors, tenures, and value; and the quantity of meadow, pasture, wood, and arable land which they contained. This monument, called Domesday Book, was perfected in six years, and is still preserved in the exchequer.*

Though the king was naturally a great economist, he was extremely addicted to hunting; and this pleasure he indulged, at the expence of his unhappy subjects. Not content with those large forests which former kings possessed in all parts of England, he resolved to make a new forest near Winchester, the usual place of his residence; and for that purpose he laid waste the country in Hampshire for an extent of thirty miles, expelled the inhabitants, seized their property, and even demolished churches and convents, without making any compensation to the sufferers. At the same time, he enacted laws which prohibited

* Some few years ago, a certain number of copies of this venerable record, were printed for the use of members of parliament, &c. Alfred composed a work of the same kind, which was long preserved at Winchester.

his subjects from hunting in his forests under the severest penalties: the killing of a deer or boar, or even a hare, was punished with the loss of the delinquent's eyes; and that at a time, when the killing a man could be atoned for by a moderate fine.

A. D. 1083. The domestic happiness of William was again interrupted by the death of his consort Matilda, whom he tenderly loved; and a war in which he was involved with France, demanded his presence in Normandy. Some of the French barons, sanctioned by their sovereign, had trespassed on his frontiers; and the displeasure of William was increased by the railleries which Philip of France had thrown out against his person. He was become corpulent, and had been detained in bed some time by sickness, when Philip jocularly expressed his surprise, that his brother of England should be so long in being delivered of his big belly. This being reported to William, he sent Philip word, that as soon as he was up, he would present so many lights at Notre-dame, as perhaps would give little pleasure to the king of France; alluding to the usual practice at that time, of women after child-birth. Immediately after his recovery, he led an army into, and laid waste the Isle of France; and took the town of Mante, which he reduced to ashes. But the progress of these hostilities was stopped by an accident, which put an end to his life. His horse starting, he bruised his belly on the pommel of the saddle; and, being in a bad habit of body, and apprehending the consequences, he ordered himself to be carried in a litter to the monastery of St. Gervas. In his last moments he was struck with remorse for the

the cruelties he had exercised: he issued orders that earl Morcar, and the other English nobles, should be released; left Normandy and Maine to his eldest son Robert; and wrote to Lanfranc, desiring him to crown his second son, William. To Henry, his third son, he bequeathed nothing save the possessions of his mother Matilda; but predicted that he would one day surpass both his brothers, in power and opulence. Having made these dispositions, he expired in the sixty-third year of his age, and in the twenty-first year of his reign over England.

Few princes have been more fortunate than William, or were more entitled to grandeur and prosperity, from the abilities and vigour of mind which he displayed in all his conduct. His spirit was bold and enterprising; and his ambition, though exorbitant, generally submitted to the duties of sound policy. Though not insensible to generosity, he was steeled against compassion; and his conduct was too austere, to render his government popular over a vanquished people, who felt that he was both a master and a tyrant.

King William had issue, besides his three sons who survived him,* five daughters; Cicily, abbess in the holy trinity of Caen, where she died: Constantia, married to the earl of Brittany: Alice, contracted to Harold: Adela, married to Stephen earl of Blois, by whom she had four sons, William, Theobald, Henry, and Stephen, of whom the elder was neglected on account of the imbecility of his understanding: and Agatha, who died on her journey to join her bridegroom, the king of Gallicia.

* He had a fourth son, named Richard, who was killed in hunting by a stag.

A. D. 1087. William, surnamed *Rufus*, from the red colour of his hair, had no sooner procured his father's letter to Lanfranc, than he hastened to England, that by his celerity he might anticipate the claims of Robert. Arriving before the intelligence of his father's death, he secured the fortresses of Dover, Pevensey, and Hastings; on plausible pretences, got possession of the royal treasure; and then declaring himself, was solemnly crowned by the primate, who professed his ready obedience to the last wish of his friend and benefactor, the Conqueror.

About the same time, Robert was acknowledged successor to Normandy; but the tranquillity with which this partition was effected, was soon interrupted. The barons, who possessed estates both in England and Normandy, were uneasy at the separation of those territories; they respected the claim of primogeniture in Robert, and they preferred his open and generous nature to the haughty disposition of his brother. A conspiracy was formed against William; the chiefs of it were Odo, bishop of Baieux, and Robert earl of Mortaigne, maternal brother of the Conqueror; and with these were associated many of the most potent Norman barons.

Conscious of his danger, William endeavoured to conciliate the affections of the English, by promises of future lenity, and the indulgence of hunting in the royal forests. Their easy credulity swelled his forces to a numerous army, with which he marched into Kent, and compelled his uncles, who had seized the fortresses of Pevensey and Rochester, to surrender. The submission of the principals, with the indolent conduct of Robert, broke the hopes of the other rebels;

rebels; some few of whom received a pardon; but the greater part were attainted, and their estates confiscated.

No sooner, however, was William delivered from his apprehensions, than he forgot his promises; not only the English were the victims of his tyranny, but he invaded the privileges of the church, and seized the temporalities of the vacant bishoprics and abbies. His ambition was equal to his avarice; he envied his brother the possession of Normandy; acquired by artifice the fortresses of St. Valory and Albermarle; and then crossed the sea with a formidable army. The mediation of the nobles on both sides prevented affairs from coming to extremities; and by a treaty, advantageous to William, he obtained the territory of Eu, and the towns of Aumale and Fescamp, on condition that he should assist Robert in reducing Maine, which had revolted from his authority. The two brothers also agreed, that on the demise of either without issue, the survivor should inherit his dominions.

In the contest between William and Robert, Henry, the youngest son of the Conqueror, had sided with the latter; but in the treaty that was concluded between the brothers, he found himself neglected. Full of indignation, he retired to St. Michael's Mount, a strong fortress on the coast of Normandy, and ravaged the neighbourhood. Robert and William besieged him with their joint forces, and reduced him to the last extremity, by the scarcity of water, when the elder, hearing of his distress, granted him permission to supply himself, and also sent him some pipes of wine for his own table. Being

ing reproved by William for this ill-timed generosity, he replied, "What, shall I suffer my brother to die of thirst? where shall we find another when he is gone?" Prince Henry was soon after obliged to capitulate; and being despoiled of all his patrimony, wandered about for some time with a few faithful adherents, and often felt the deepest distress.

To the Norman war succeeded hostilities in Scotland, and these were scarce suspended before the enmity of Robert and William was renewed. The latter had invaded Normandy with twenty thousand men; but his progress was checked by a domestic insurrection, and the intelligence that the Welsh had entered England. Immediately returning, by his vigour he crushed the rebels, and repelled the invaders; but the noise of these petty wars and commotions soon sunk in the tumult of the crusades, which engrossed the attention and agitated the hearts of the principal nations of Europe.

A. D. 1069. The Arabians, inflamed by the pretended revelations of Mahomet, had spread their empire from the banks of the Ganges to the streights of Gibraltar. The Turcomans, who were their brethren in faith, and their rivals in dominion, had wrested from them Syria, and possessed themselves of Jerusalem. The barbarous manners of the Turks terrified the pilgrims who attempted to visit the holy sepulchre; and these, on their return, filled all Christendom with indignation against the infidels. Above the rest, Peter the Hermit, a native of Amiens in Picardy, was distinguished by his eloquence and the vehemence of his complaints; nor was his resentment against the Moslems confined to words:

words; he entertained the design of leading against them the hardy warriors of the West. Pope Martin the Second entered into his views; and summoned at Placentia a council of ecclesiastics and senators so numerous, that they were obliged to meet in a plain. The harangue of the pontiff, and of Peter himself, who represented the indignity the Christian name suffered from allowing the holy city to remain in the hands of infidels, was answered by the acclamations of a countless multitude, inflamed with holy zeal. A second council, which Martin held at Clermont, in Auvergne, was still more fully attended: his pathetic exhortation kindled the impatience of his hearers: "It is the will of God! it is the will of God!" was the universal exclamation. The sign of the cross became the badge of union, and was affixed on their right shoulder, by all who enlisted themselves in this sacred warfare.

Such was the general ardour, that while the youthful and vigorous took up arms, the infirm and aged contributed to the expedition by presents and money. A promiscuous disorderly multitude of 300,000 persons, impatient to commence operations, under the conduct of Peter the Hermit,* attempted to penetrate through Hungary and Bulgaria, to Constantinople; and perished by disease, by famine, and the sword. These were followed by the more numerous and better disciplined bands from France, Germany, Normandy, Italy, and England, led by Hugh count of Vermendois, brother to the French king, Raymond count of

* Surnamed the *Moneyless*.

Toulouse

Toulouse, Godfrey of Bouillon, prince of Brabant, and Stephen count of Blois.

Robert duke of Normandy, impelled by the bravery and mistaken generosity of his spirit, had early engaged in the crusade; but being destitute of money, he offered to mortgage, or rather sell his dominions, to his brother William, for the inadequate sum of ten thousand marks. The bargain was soon concluded; and while Robert set out with a magnificent train for the holy land, William possessed himself of Normandy, and thus reunited, beneath his authority, the extensive territories of his father.

Rufus himself was far from being infected with the enthusiasm of the age. He was even reputed irreligious, and we are told that he once accepted of sixty marks from a Jew, whose son had been converted to Christianity, and who engaged him by the present to assist him in bringing back the youth to Judaism. William employed both menaces and persuasion for that purpose; the convert was, however, inflexible; and the king, when he sent to the father, to inform him of the event, observed, that it was but equitable he should retain half the money for the pains he had taken, though he had failed of the intended success.

But whatever might be the religious creed of William, certain it is that he quarrelled with Anselm the primate. The king had undertaken an expedition against Wales, and required the archbishop to furnish his quota of soldiers; the latter was afraid to refuse, but sent them so miserably accoutred, that William threatened him with a prosecution. Affairs came to such extremities between them, that Anselm,

in fear for his life, retired beyond sea; and all his temporalities were seized. But he was received with great respect by the Roman pontiff, who espoused his cause with so much zeal as even to menace the king with excommunication, though he suspended to fulminate his edict.

A. D. 1097.

The cession of Normandy and Maine had extended the dominions, but by dividing, had weakened the power of William. The Norman nobles in their revolts were supported by the French monarch. Helie lord of le Fleche, a small town of Anjou, had acquired the affections of the citizens of Maine; and being introduced into the town of Mans, pressed the siege of the citadel. William, who was hunting in Devonshire when he received the intelligence of this hostile attempt, was so provoked, that he immediately turned his horse, and galloped to the port of Dartmouth. He found the weather so tempestuous that the mariners considered it dangerous to put to sea; but William ordered them to set sail instantly, telling them, that they never yet heard of a king that was drowned. By his celerity and vigour, he preserved the citadel of Mans, and pursued Helie into his own territories; but in the siege of the castle of Majol he received a wound, which obliged him to abandon the enterprise, and to return to England.

This check, however, had not diminished in the king the insatiate desire of acquisition. William, earl of Poictiers, and duke of Guienne, inflamed with the spirit of adventure, determined to join the crusaders; and as he too wanted money to equip himself, he proposed to mort-

gage

gage his dominions to the king of England, who accepted the offer, and had prepared a fleet and army to escort the money, and to take possession of the rich provinces of Guienne and Poictou, when an accident put a final stop to all his ambitious projects and views of aggrandisement. He was engaged in the New Forest in hunting, accompanied by Walter Tyrrel, a French gentleman, remarkable for his skill in archery; and as William dismounted after a chace, Tyrrel, impatient to shew his dexterity, let fly an arrow at a stag which suddenly started before him. The arrow glancing from a tree, struck the king in the breast, and instantly killed him. Tyrrel, fearful of suspicions which perhaps he was conscious of incurring, without informing the royal attendants, gained the sea shore, embarked for France, and proceeded on an expedition to Jerusalem, as a penance for his involuntary crime. The body of William was found by the country people, and conveyed in a cart to Winchester, where it was interred.* Perfidious and oppressive, the extremes of prodigality and rapacity, which were reconciled in him, had long estranged from him the hearts of his subjects. The chief monuments that perpetuate his name are the Tower, Westminster Hall, and London Bridge.

Adorned with the barren laurels which he had acquired by his valour in rescuing Jerusalem from the infidels, Robert was returning to his native country, when in passing through

* The person who carried the corpse of Rufus to interment was named *Purkis*, and some of his descendants at this very day reside near the same spot.

Italy,

Italy, he was struck with the charms of Sybilla, the daughter of an Italian count, whose hand he solicited and obtained. But while in that delicious climate he indulged his passion, his friends in England and Normandy in vain expected his arrival; and the crown, which both his birth and martial reputation entitled him to, was usurped by his younger brother.

A. D. 1100.

Prince Henry was hunting with Rufus in the New Forest, when that monarch met his fate; and, hastening to Winchester, extorted by menaces the royal treasure from William de Breteuil, the keeper. Pursuing without delay his journey to London, and having assembled some noblemen and prelates, whom his address or liberality gained to his side, he was saluted king; and in less than three days after his brother's death, was solemnly crowned by Maurice bishop of London.

To maintain the dignity which he had thus irregularly usurped, Henry resolved to court, by fair professions, the favour of his subjects. He passed a charter, which was framed to remedy many of the grievous oppressions that had been complained of, during the reigns of his father and brother. To the clergy he promised, that he would never seize the revenues of a see or abbey during its vacancy; nor farm, or dispose of, for money, any ecclesiastical benefice. To the nobility he engaged, that upon the death of any earl, baron, or military tenant, his heir, or whoever should be named in his will, should be admitted to the possession of his estate, on paying a just relief. He remitted the wardship of minors, and allowed guardians

to be appointed, who should be answerable for the trust; and he consented not to dispose of any heiress in marriage, but by the advice of all his barons. He renounced the right of imposing moneyage, and of levying taxes at pleasure, on the farms which the barons retained in their own hands; he offered a pardon for all offences, and forgave all debts due to the crown; he required that the vassals of the barons should enjoy the same privileges which he granted to his own; and he promised a general confirmation and observance of the laws of king Edward, for which the English had long sighed in vain.

Such were the chief articles of this celebrated charter, a copy of which was lodged in some abbey of each county; but which, though it served the present purpose, in less than a century fell into oblivion. Henry was ready to promise, but slow to redress grievances which flowed from the exercise of regal authority. To increase indeed his popularity, he committed to prison Ralph Flambard, bishop of Durham, who had been the chief instrument of oppression under his brother; but this act was followed by another which was a direct violation of his own charter: he kept the see of Durham vacant for five years, and, during that time, received its revenues.

Sensible of the great authority which Anselm had acquired by his character of piety, and by the persecution he had sustained, he was anxious to engage his friendship; and accordingly reinstated him in his dignities. He next formed a design of marrying Matilda, daughter of Malcolm the third, king of Scotland, and

niece

niece to Edgar Atheling; which contract being settled, her espousals with Henry were celebrated by the primate, with great pomp and magnificence.

By his marriage with a Saxon princess, Henry had endeared himself to the English, whose support became necessary for the defence of his crown. Robert, on his arrival from Italy, had established his authority over Normandy, and was invited into England by several of the principal nobility; even the seamen were affected with the general popularity of his character; and carried over to him the greater part of the fleet, which had been equipped to oppose his passage. By caresses and declarations, by the influence of Anselm, and the name of Matilda, Henry assembled a sufficient force to encounter his brother, and pressed forwards towards Portsmouth, where he had landed. The two armies lay in sight of each other for several days without coming to action: both princes seemed apprehensive of the event, and, by the mediation of Anselm, a treaty took place. It was stipulated that Robert, in lieu of his pretensions to England, should receive a portion of 3000 marks; that if either of the princes died, the survivor should succeed to his dominions; and that the adherents of each should receive a full pardon.

A. D. 1101.

Though the advantage of this treaty was manifestly on the side of Henry, he was the first to violate it; and to watch the moment to avenge himself on the friends of Robert. The usual violence and tyranny of the Norman barons soon afforded him an opportunity to bring to trial, and to execute the earls of Shrewsbury and

and Surrey, the principal abettors of Robert. Enraged at their fate, that prince had passed over to England, and remonstrated severely with his brother; but he met with so cold a reception, that he fancied his own liberty in danger, and was glad to purchase an escape by resigning his pension.

The misconduct of Robert encouraged the ambition of Henry. The former was alternately plunged in the most dissolute pleasures, or abandoned to the most womanish superstition; and Normandy became a scene of violence and depredation. To avail himself of these disorders, Henry with a formidable army entered the dutchy. In his first campaign he took Baieux by storm, and was admitted into Caen. In his second, Robert, roused from his lethargy, advanced to meet him, with a view of terminating their quarrels in a decisive battle: he resumed his wonted spirit; he animated his troops by his example; and in the first charge broke the English ranks; but when he had the fairest prospect of victory, his hopes were blasted by the cowardice and flight of one of his generals; and Robert with ten thousand of his followers were made prisoners. Normandy submitted to the victor; and the vanquished prince was carried into England, and detained during the remainder of his life in the castle of Cardiff in Glamorganshire.

The conquest of Normandy seemed to establish the throne of Henry; and, having obtained his ends, he no longer yielded an implicit obedience to the opinions of Anselm, who had treated him with contumacy: a violent rupture took place between them; but, by the mediation of the pope,

pope, matters were brought to an accommodation, which if it did not restore confidence, put an end to animosity, both with the prelate and the holy see.

From this embarrassment Henry was scarcely delivered, before he was involved in another. Though he had detained Robert a prisoner in England, he had intrusted William, the son of that prince, a youth about six years old, to the care of Halie de St. Saen, a nobleman of strict honour and probity, who had married Robert's natural daughter. Henry had soon reason to repent of his choice; for when he desired to recover possession of William's person, Halie conveyed his pupil to the court of Fulk, count of Anjou, and soon obtained for him the protection of Lewis the Gross, king of France. These measures demanded the presence of Henry in Normandy; and on the frontiers of that dutchy, he waged an unequal but not an inglorious war, against the count of Anjou, and the king of France, who supported the pretensions of the son of Robert. By his address, however, he detached Fulk from the interests of the confederates; and by his vigour and conduct, he soon after compelled Lewis to subscribe a peace, in which the claims of the young prince were forgotten. A. D. 1108.

Soon after the affairs of Normandy were adjusted, Henry met with one of the severest domestic calamities, that human nature can undergo. His only son, William, had reached his eighteenth year; he had been affianced to the daughter of Fulk, count of Anjou; and had been acknowledged as successor to the kingdom of England, and the dutchy of Normandy. Detained

tained at Barfleur, whence Henry had embarked to return to England, some hours after his father, his captain and crew had consumed the interval in drinking; and when they weighed anchor, in their impatience to overtake the king, they struck the ship on a rock, where she immediately foundered. William was instantly put into the long-boat, and had already got clear of the ship; when hearing the cries of his natural sister, the countess of Perche, he ordered the seamen to row back, in hopes of saving her. But the numbers who then crowded in, soon sunk the boat; and the prince with all his retinue perished. Above an hundred and forty young noblemen of the principal families of England and Normandy were lost on this occasion; and the only person who escaped to relate the melancholy tale, was a butcher of Rouen, who clung to the mast, and was taken up the next morning by fishermen.

A. D. 1121. When this mournful intelligence was conveyed to Henry, he fainted away, and never after recovered his wonted chearfulness. He had now no legitimate issue except one daughter, Matilda, whom he had betrothed, when only eight years of age, to the emperor Henry the fifth, and whom he had sent over to be educated in Germany. Fearful lest her absence and marriage into a foreign family should endanger the succession, and in hopes of male heirs, Henry obtained the hand of Adalair, daughter of Godfrey duke of Lovaine. Adalair, however, proved barren in his embraces; and Fulk count of Anjou awakening his jealousy, he thought it prudent to conciliate him by bestowing his daughter Matilda, who had

had just become a widow, on Geoffrey the son of that prince.

Though the government of Henry was arbitrary, it was as little oppressive as the necessity of his affairs would permit. The tenants of the king's demesnes were not only obliged to provide the court *gratis* with provisions, but to furnish carriages whenever his majesty made a progress into any of the counties. These duties were aggravated by the insolence with which they were inforced; but Henry punished with rigour those who had abused his confidence by adding insult to oppression.

The tranquillity of England enabled Henry to revisit Normandy, and soon after his arrival, his satisfaction was increased by his daughter, the empress Matilda, being brought to bed of a son, who was named after him. On this occasion, the nobility of England and Normandy renewed to that princess the oath of fealty which they had already sworn. Two more sons of whom she was successively delivered, augmented Henry's partiality for her; but some incursions of the Welsh determined him to return to England, when he was suddenly attacked by an illness, at St. Denis le Forment, from eating too plentifully of lampreys, which proved fatal to him. He died in the sixty-seventh year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign, leaving by will his daughter Matilda the heir of all his dominions. His body was brought to England, and interred in the abbey of Reading. A. D. 1131.

Henry was certainly one of the most accomplished

plished princes that has filled the English throne. His person was manly, and his countenance engaging; he was eloquent, penetrating, and brave; affable in his address; and strongly susceptible of friendship as well as resentment. By his great progress in literature, he acquired the name of *Beau-clerc*, or the scholar; but his application to those sedentary pursuits abated nothing of the activity and vigilance of his government.*

A. D. 1135. The failure of male heirs to the kingdom of England and the dutchy of Normandy, seemed to leave the succession open, without a rival, to the empress Matilda; and as Henry had made all his vassals in both states swear fealty to her, he presumed that they would not easily be induced to depart at once from her hereditary right, and from their own reiterated engagements; but it was from his own family he had to dread the invasion of his daughter's title.

Adela, daughter of William the Conqueror, who married the count of Blois, brought him several sons; among whom Stephen and Henry, the two youngest, had been invited over to England by the late king, and had received great honours, riches, and preferment. Henry having a partiality for the church, was created bishop of Winchester; and Stephen had married Matilda, daughter and heiress of the count of Boulogne, who brought him, besides that

* At his accession, Henry granted a charter to London, which seems to have been the first step towards rendering that city a corporation.

sovereignty,

sovereignty, an immense landed property in England, at the same time that she strengthened his interest by powerful connections.

Stephen had always affected the greatest attachment to his uncle, and the most ardent zeal for the succession of Matilda; yet at the same time he neglected not to cultivate the friendship of the English nation. By his bravery he had acquired the esteem of the barons; by his generosity and affability, he had obtained the affections of the people, particularly of the Londoners; and no sooner had Henry breathed his last, than he gave full reins to his ambition. He hastened over to England; and though the citizens of Dover and of Canterbury, apprised of his purpose, shut their gates against him, he stopped not till he arrived at London. The populace, who had been prepared by his emissaries, saluted him king; and by the influence of his brother, the bishop of Winchester, he gained the clergy. The obsequious conscience of the archbishop of Canterbury, was reconciled by an artful fiction; and Stephen was solemnly crowned by that prelate, without much attendance indeed, but without opposition.

It was not, however, on the fidelity of the clergy or nobility, that Stephen relied, He allured from the continent, by his liberality, a race of men inured to slaughter, equally insensible to fear and justice, and who knew no law but his will; these guarded a throne which seemed established by the submission of the people, and the acquired sanction of the pope.

The Normans no sooner heard that Stephen had seized the English crown, than they swore allegiance to him; and Matilda was scarcely informed

informed of her father's death, before she found another had usurped her rights. Yet Stephen was far from being free from apprehension; he dreaded, in particular, Robert earl of Glocester, natural son to the late king, a man of honour and abilities, and zealously attached to his sister Matilda. This nobleman indeed took the oath of fealty to Stephen; but he took it with the reserve that the king should never invade any of his rights or dignities. The clergy and the nobility imitated his example; and many of the latter, as the price of submission, required the right of fortifying their castles, and of putting themselves in a state of defence. All England was immediately filled with their fortresses; and the aristocratical power, which is usually so oppressive in feudal governments, rose rapidly to a height before unknown, and overshadowed the regal authority.

But Stephen was not of a disposition tamely to submit to these encroachments, without a severe retaliation. He indulged his mercenaries in every species of depredation; and the indignation with which the English bore their arrogance was fomented by the earl of Glocester, who retiring beyond sea, solemnly renounced his allegiance, and sent the king a defiance. About the same time David, king of Scotland, appeared at the head of an army in defence of his niece Matilda's title, and penetrating into Yorkshire, committed the most barbarous devastations. The fury of his ravages enraged the northern barons, who might otherwise have been inclined to join him; they assembled their vassals; and at North Allerton awaited the enemy. The battle was obstinate; but the Scots were defeated;

feated; David and his son Henry narrowly escaped the pursuit of the victors; and this success awed the mal-contents into submission.

Stephen, however, soon became embroiled with the clergy. Many of the prelates acted as barons, and employed their military power against their sovereign, or their neighbours. Amongst these, Roger bishop of Salisbury had built two castles at Sherborne and the Devizes; and his nephew Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, had erected a fortress at Newark. Stephen, sensible of the mischiefs attending these multiplied citadels, resolved to begin with destroying those of the clergy. On pretence of a fray which had arisen between the retinues of the bishop of Salisbury and the earl of Brittany, he seized both that prelate and the bishop of Lincoln, and obliged them to deliver up their strong places.

The bishop of Winchester, armed with a legatine commission, though the king's brother, forgot the ties of blood in the privileges of his order. In a synod at Westminster he complained of the impiety of Stephen's measures, and that assembly summoned the king to justify himself before them. Stephen, instead of resenting the indignity, sent Aubery de Bare to plead his cause, who accused the two prelates of treason and sedition. The synod however refused to examine their conduct until the castles were restored; and while this dispute augmented the discontent of the people, the empress Matilda, invited by the legate himself, and accompanied by the earl of Glocester, landed, and was speedily joined by many persons of distinction. A. D. 1139.

The war immediately broke out in every quarter;

ter; and England, for more than a year, was distressed and laid waste by the mutual rage of the contending factions. At last a battle took place between Stephen and the earl of Glocester. After a violent shock, the two wings of the royalists were put to flight; and Stephen himself, surrounded by the enemy, was borne down by numbers, and taken prisoner.

Had Matilda been capable of moderation, or had she attended to the counsels of her best friends, she might now have defied the intrigues of her enemies: but she was by nature passionate and imperious; nor did she know how to temper by affability the harshness of a refusal. Stephen's queen, seconded by many of the nobility, petitioned for the liberty of her husband, on condition that he should renounce the crown, and retire into a convent; the legate desired that prince Eustace, his nephew, might inherit Boulogne, and the other patrimonial estates of his father; and the Londoners applied for the establishment of king Edward's laws, instead of those of king Henry. All these petitions, however, were rejected in the most haughty and peremptory manner; and the legate, availing himself of her indiscretion, excited the Londoners to revolt. Matilda, informed of their intentions to seize her person, fled to Oxford, and thence to Winchester: the siege of that city was instantly formed by the legate, who had assembled his vassals, and had been joined by the mercenaries of Stephen. The princess made her escape; but earl Robert, her brother, fell into the hands of the enemy. The empress, sensible of his merit and importance, consented to exchange Stephen for him; and the

A. D. 1141.

the civil war was rekindled with greater fury than ever.

During the captivity of Stephen, Normandy had submitted to the earl of Anjou; and Robert persuaded Geoffrey to let his son Henry, a young prince of great hopes, pass over into England. This expedient, however, produced nothing decisive; the war was still continued with various success; and Matilda, harassed with incessant action, sought repose with her son in Normandy.

The weakness of the competitors, rather than any decrease of mutual animosity, at last produced a tacit cessation of arms in England; and many of the nobility had embarked in the holy wars, when an event happened that threatened a revival of hostilities. Prince Henry, who had reached his sixteenth year, desirous of receiving the honour of knighthood, from his great uncle, David, king of Scotland, had repaired to that court with a great retinue, and thence made several incursions into England. In these, his dexterity and vigour, his valour and prudence, raised the hopes of his party, and soon after his return to Normandy, he was, by Matilda's consent, invested in that duchy. Upon the death of his father Geoffrey, which happened in the subsequent year, he took possession both of Anjou and Maine, and gained a great accession by his marriage with Eleanor, daughter and heiress of William duke of Guienne, and earl of Poictou, who had been divorced from Lewis the seventh of France.

The lustre which he received from this acquisition had such an effect in England, that when Stephen, desirous to insure the crown to his son Eustace, required the archbishop of Canterbury

to anoint that prince as his successor, the primate refused compliance, and escaped beyond sea from the resentment of his sovereign.

Henry, informed of these dispositions, invaded England; and at Malmesbury prepared to encounter Stephen in a pitched battle. The great men on both sides, alarmed at the consequences of a decisive action, compelled the rival princes to a negotiation. The death of Eustace, during the treaty, facilitated its conclusion. On the demise of Stephen, the crown was to revert to Henry; and William, Stephen's surviving son, was to succeed to the earldom of Boulogne, and his patrimonial estate. After all the barons had sworn to the observance of this treaty, and done homage to Henry, as heir apparent to the crown, that prince evacuated the kingdom; and the death of Stephen, which happened the next year, after a short illness, in the fiftieth year of his age, put an end to farther jealousies.

Had Stephen succeeded by a just title, and been left to the quiet exercise of his power, he appears to have been well qualified to have promoted the happiness of his subjects. He was possessed of industry, activity, and courage; and though his judgment may be arraigned, his humanity must be acknowledged, and his address commended. His elevation to the throne produced neither satisfaction to himself, nor prosperity to his people. During his whole reign, England was rent with civil broils; and amidst these, appeals to the pope became common in every ecclesiastical controversy, though they had always been prohibited by the English laws. Hence the see of Rome made a rapid progress in

its

its encroachments, and ultimately pretended to a paramount authority over the kings of this country themselves.

CHAP. IV.

Reigns of Henry II. *Richard* I. *and John.*

WHEN Henry the second was called to the throne of England, he was master, in right of his father, of Anjou and Touraine; in that of his mother, of Normandy and Maine; in that of his wife, of Guienne, Poictou, Xaintonge, Auverne, Perigord, Angoumois, and the Limosin; and he soon after annexed Brittany to his other states; all which rendered him one of the most powerful monarchs in Christendom, and an object of great jealousy to the king of France.

But to countervail the advantages of swaying the sceptre over such a numerous people and extensive territories, the subjects of Henry were disunited by situation and by law, by language and by manners; and the prince himself, from his residence in England, was considered as a kind of foreigner in his French dominions; yet under every circumstance, the rising grandeur of the house of Anjou or Plantagenet, could not fail to impress with terror the king of France. Lewis had ever maintained a strict union with Stephen, and had endeavoured to prop the tottering fortunes of that bold usurper. But after this prince's death, it was too late to think of opposing the succession of Henry, who had been received in England with the acclamations of all orders of men.

The first acts of his government corresponded to the high idea entertained of his abilities. He

 dismissed

dismissed the obnoxious mercenaries of Stephen; revoked all grants made by his predecessors; restored the coin which had been debased during the former reign; and was rigorous in the execution of justice, and the suppression of violence.

His brother Geoffrey, by the voluntary election of the inhabitants, had acquired the city and county of Nantz; but dying soon after he had taken possession of them, Henry, as his heir, claimed these territories. By a contract of marriage which he entered into between his son, then only five years old, and a daughter of Lewis, still in her cradle, he prevailed on the latter prince not to oppose his pretensions; and crossing the seas, he entered Brittany with a formidable army. The able conduct of the king procured him still more important advantages; by his address he concluded another marriage between his third son, Geoffrey, and the daughter and heiress of the duke of Brittany: the duke of Brittany died soon after; and Henry, as the guardian of his infant son and daughter-in-law, took possession of that principality,

The French king had been an inactive spectator of the progress of Henry in Brittany; but he resisted his attempts to seize the county of Thoulouse. An open war was kindled between the two monarchs; but it was productive of no memorable event; and the differences of these potent rivals were accommodated by the mediation of the pope.

A. D. 1161. On his return to England, Henry directed his attention towards the encroachments of Rome: these had grown with a rapidity not to be brooked by a prince of his

high

high spirit; and to facilitate his design of suppressing them, he advanced to the dignity of metropolitan, Becket, his chancellor, of whose flexibility of temper he had made a wrong estimate.

Thomas à Becket was born of reputable parents in the city of London. He early insinuated himself into the favour of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, and obtained from that prelate considerable preferment. This enabled him to pursue at Boulogne, the study of civil and canon law; and by gradual advances, he rose to the dignity of chancellor of England. Being of a gay and splendid turn, and apparently little tenacious of ecclesiastical privileges, Henry thought him the fittest person, on the death of Theobald, for the high station of metropolitan; but no sooner was he installed in this dignity, than he altered his demeanor and conduct. He maintained in his retinue and attendants alone, his ancient pomp and lustre; in his own person he affected the greatest austerity; seemed perpetually employed in reciting prayers, and pious lectures; and all men of penetration plainly saw that he was meditating some great design.

Henry, though he perceived too late, that Becket was wholly intent on promoting the interests of his order, was far from relinquishing his design of retrenching the clerical usurpations. The schism for the papacy which divided all Europe, afforded him an opportunity favourable to his projects. Among other inventions to obtain money, the clergy had induced the necessity of penance as an atonement for sin; and the sums of money that were received by the priests in lieu of these penances, are said to have exceeded

ceeded the amount of the king's revenue. To ease his people of so heavy an imposition, Henry demanded that a civil officer of his appointment, should be present in all ecclesiastical courts, and should for the future give his consent to every composition, which was made with sinners for their spiritual offences.

The ecclesiastics in that age had renounced all immediate subordination to the magistrate; and as many of them were of low character, crimes of the blackest dye were committed daily with impunity by them. An hundred murders since the king's accession had been perpetrated by men in holy orders. A clerk in Worcestershire, having debauched a gentleman's daughter, had proceeded to murder the father; the general indignation against the crime, moved the king to attempt the remedy of an abuse which had become so palpable; he required that the clerk should be delivered up, and receive condign punishment from the magistrate. Becket insisted on the privileges of the church, and maintained, no greater punishment could be inflicted on the criminal than degradation. Henry, exasperated, summoned an assembly of the prelates of England; and demanded whether they were willing to submit the affair to the ancient laws of the kingdom: and though at first they endeavoured to evade the question, by the exception *of their own order*, they yielded soon after to his menaces. Becket, however, for a long time remained inflexible; and at last rather complied in consequence of the desires of the court of Rome, than of the threats of the king.

But Henry was not content with a declaration in general terms; he resolved to define expressly those

those laws to which he required obedience; and in order to mark the limits between the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, he summoned a general council of the nobility and prelates at Clarendon; when by his influence or authority, the laws so favourable to prerogative, known by the name of the *Constitutions of Clarendon*, were voted without opposition.

Henry, by thus reducing the ancient customs of the realm to writing, endeavoured to prevent all future dispute, on the subjects which they related, and thought he had thus fully established the superiority of the legislature above all spiritual canons. Apprehensive, however, that the bishops might retract their consent to these constitutions, he required them to set their seal to them. Becket, of all the prelates, alone opposed his will; but finding himself deserted even by his brethren, he at length gave way, and engaged by oath, *legally, with good faith, and without fraud or reservation*, to observe them. The ratification of the pope was still thought requisite; but though Alexander owed the highest obligations to Henry, he rejected the constitutions of Clarendon, which he saw would render England independent of the papal power; and only offered, for the sake of peace, to ratify a few of the least important articles.

Becket no sooner learnt the determination of the Roman pontiff, than he expressed the deepest sorrow for his compliance, and endeavoured to engage the other bishops to adhere to their common rights, in which he represented the interest and honour of God to be concerned. To make him feel his resentment, Henry excited against him a prosecution for some land that he held,

and

and when the primate excused himself, on account of indisposition, from appearing, that prince summoned a great council at Northampton, in which he was arraigned as guilty of a contempt of the king's court; and being condemned, all his goods and chattels were confiscated.

Henry, not satisfied with this sentence, however violent and oppressive, soon after required Becket to give in the accounts of his administration while chancellor; and estimated the balance due, at 44,000 marks; for which he demanded sureties. In this emergency, several of the primate's friends advised him to resign his see, on condition of receiving an acquittal; but the daring spirit of Becket rejected these timid counsels; and he determined to brave his enemies. After celebrating mass, where he had previously ordered that the entroit to the communion service should begin with the words, *princes sat and spake against me*, arrayed in the sacred vestments, and bearing the cross aloft in his hands, he entered the royal apartments; and declared that he put himself and his see under the protection of the supreme pontiff.

This appeal to the pope in a civil cause, was a matter new and unprecedented; but Becket was resolute to persevere in it. He refused to hear the sentence which the barons and sheriffs had passed on the king's claim: and, having in vain asked permission to leave Northampton, he withdrew secretly to the sea-coast, and found a vessel which conveyed him to France, where he was received with every token of regard.

To provide against the consequences of the breach which impended between his kingdom and

and the apostolic see, Henry inhibited, under severe penalties, all appeals to the pope or archbishop: he declared it treasonable to bring from either of them an interdict upon the kingdom, and punishable, in secular clergymen, by the loss of their eyes, and castration; in regulars, by amputation of their feet: and in laics, with death.

On the other hand, Becket not only issued a censure, excommunicating the king's chief ministers by name, but also abrogated and annulled the constitutions of Clarendon; and declared that he suspended the spiritual thunder over Henry himself, solely that the prince might avoid the blow by a timely repentance.

Henry eluded the immediate danger, by flattering Alexander with the prospect of a speedy reconciliation between himself and Becket, which at length took place; and Becket was allowed to return, on conditions which may be esteemed both honourable and advantageous to that prelate. He was not required to give up any rights of the church, or resign any of those pretensions which had been the original ground of the controversy. It was agreed that all these questions should be buried in oblivion; but that Becket and his adherents should, without making farther submission, be restored to all their livings, and that even the possessors of such benefices as depended on the see of Canterbury, and had been filled during the primate's absence, should be expelled, and Becket have liberty to supply the vacancies. In return for concessions which trenched so deeply on the honour and dignity of the crown, Henry reaped only the advantage of seeing his ministers absolved from the sentence of

of excommunication pronounced against them, and of preventing the interdict, with which his kingdom had been threatened. It was easy indeed to see how much he dreaded that event, when a prince of so high a spirit, on one occasion humiliated himself so far as to hold the stirrup of the haughty Becket, while he mounted his horse.

But Henry did not even gain a temporary tranquillity by his concession. While he daily dreaded the sentence of excommunication, he had thought it prudent to associate his son prince Henry in the royalty. The ceremony had been performed by the hands of Roger, archbishop of York; but Becket pretended, as archbishop of Canterbury, he had the sole right to officiate, and therefore, in the name of the pope, he suspended the archbishop of York, and excommunicated the bishops of London and Salisbury, with others who had assisted at the coronation of the prince.

The king, who was then at Baieux, being vehemently agitated on hearing this new instance of Becket's arrogance, burst forth into an exclamation against his servants, whose want of zeal, he said, had so long left him exposed to the enterprises of that ungrateful and imperious prelate. Four gentlemen of his household, Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Traci, Hugh de Moreville, and Richard Brito, taking these passionate expressions to be a hint for the primate's death, immediately communicated their thoughts to each other; and swearing to avenge their prince's quarrel, secretly withdrew from court. Some menacing expressions which they had dropped, gave a suspicion of their design; and the

the king dispatched a messenger after them, charging them to attempt nothing against the person of Becket: but these orders arrived too late to prevent their fatal purpose. The four assassins, though they took different roads to England, arrived nearly at the same time at Saltwood, near Canterbury, and being there joined by some assistants, they proceeded in great haste to the archiepiscopal palace. They found the primate, who trusted entirely to the sacredness of his character, very slenderly attended; and though they threw out many menaces and reproaches against him, he was so incapable of fear, that, without using any precautions against their violence, he immediately proceeded to St. Benedict's church to hear vespers. They followed him thither, attacked him before the altar, and having cloven his head with many blows, retired without experiencing any opposition.

Such was the tragical end of Thomas à Becket, a prelate of the most lofty, intrepid, and inflexible spirit, who was able to cover to the world, and probably to himself, the enterprises of pride and ambition, under the disguise of sanctity, and of zeal for the interests of religion; but who certainly was a bad subject, and therefore could not be a good man.

Henry, on the first report of Becket's violent measures, had purposed to have him arrested, and had already taken some steps towards the execution of that design; but the intelligence of his murder threw the prince into great consternation; and he was immediately sensible of the dangerous consequences which he had reason to apprehend from so horrible an event. An archbishop

archbishop of reputed sanctity, assassinated before the altar, in the exercise of his function, and on account of his zeal in maintaining ecclesiastical privileges, must attain the highest honours of martyrdom; while his reputed murderer would be ranked among the most bloody tyrants that had ever deserved the hatred and detestation of mankind. These considerations gave the king the most unaffected concern; and as it was extremely his interest to clear himself from all suspicion, he took no care to conceal the depth of his affliction. He shut himself up from the light of day, and from all commerce with his servants: he even refused, during three days, all food and sustenance. The courtiers, apprehending dangerous effects from his despair, were at last obliged to break in upon his solitude; and employing every topic of consolation, induced him to accept of nourishment, and occupied his leisure in taking precautions against the consequences which he so justly apprehended from the catastrophe of the primate.

The most important point which Henry had to establish, was to convince the pope of his innocence; or rather to dissuade him from proceeding to extremities against England. The archbishop of Rouen, the bishops of Worcester and Evreux, with five persons of inferior quality, were immediately dispatched to Rome; they were with difficulty admitted to an audience; and the rage of Alexander was not appeased until they made oath before the whole consistory, of their sovereign's innocence, and engaged that he would make every submission that should be required of him.

Though the rage of the clergy was thus diverted

verted from the king, their zeal for the memory of Becket found employment in extolling the merits of his martyrdom. Endless were the panegyrics on his virtues; and the miracles wrought by his reliques were more numerous, more ridiculous, and more impudently attested, than those which ever filled the legend of any confessor or martyr. Two years after his death he was canonized by pope Alexander; a solemn jubilee was established for celebrating his merits: his body was enriched with presents from all parts of Christendom; pilgrimages were performed to obtain his intercession with heaven; and it was computed, that in one year, above an hundred thousand pilgrims arrived in Canterbury, and paid their devotions at his shrine.

A. D. 1172.

In the mean time, Henry, delivered from instant danger of the thunders of the Vatican, undertook an expedition against Ireland. That island, about the middle of the twelfth century, besides several small tribes, contained the principal sovereignties of Munster, Leinster, Meath, Ulster, and Connaught, and as it had been usual for the one or the other of these to take the lead in their wars, there was commonly some prince, who seemed, for the time, to act as monarch of Ireland. Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, was then advanced to this dignity; but his government, ill obeyed even within his own territory, could not unite the people in any measures, either for the establishment of order, or for defence against foreigners. The ambition of Henry had, very early in his reign, been moved by the prospect of these advantages, to attempt the subjecting of Ireland; and a pretence was only wanting to in-

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vade a people, who being always confined to their own island, had never given any reason of complaint to their neighbours. For this purpose, he had recourse to Rome; which assumed a right to dispose of kingdoms and empires; and not foreseeing the dangerous disputes, which he was one day to maintain with that see, assisted to give sanctions to claims which were now become dangerous to all sovereigns. Adrian III. who then filled the papal chair was by birth an Englishman; and being on that account the more disposed to oblige Henry, he was easily persuaded to act as master of the world, and to make, without any hazard or expence, the acquisition of a great island to his spiritual jurisdiction. Henry, however, though armed with this authority, did not immediately put his design in execution; but being detained by more interesting business on the continent, waited for a favourable opportunity of invading Ireland.

Dermot Macmorrogh, king of Leinster, having rendered himself obnoxious, by his licentious tyranny, had been expelled his dominions by a confederacy, of which the king of Connaught was the chief. The exiled prince applied to Henry for succour, who furnished him with letters patent, by which he empowered his subjects to aid him in the recovery of his dominions. Dermot engaged with Richard, surnamed Strongbow, earl of Strigul; who stipulated, for this assistance, the hand of his daughter Eva, and a promise that he should be declared heir to his territories. While Richard was assembling his vassals, Dermot went into Wales; and meeting with Robert Fitz-Stephens, constable of Abertevi, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald, he also engaged them

them in his service, and obtained their promise of invading Ireland: he himself immediately crossed the seas, concealed himself in a monastery that he had founded, and prepared every thing for the reception of his English allies.

The troops of Fitz-Stephens were first ready. That gentleman landed in Ireland with thirty knights, sixty esquires, and three hundred archers; and with this small body, struck a great terror into the barbarous inhabitants, and seemed to menace them with a signal revolution. The conjunction of Maurice de Pendergast, who, about the same time, brought over ten knights, and sixty archers, enabled Fitz-Stephens to attempt the siege of Wexford, a town inhabited by the Danes; and after gaining an advantage, he made himself master of the place. Soon after, Fitz-Gerald arrived with ten knights, thirty esquires, and a hundred archers; and being joined by the former adventurers, composed a force which nothing in Ireland was able to withstand.

Roderic, the chief monarch of the island, was foiled in different actions; the prince of Ossory was obliged to submit, and give hostages for his peaceable behaviour; and Dermot, not content with being restored to his kingdom of Leinster, projected the dethroning of Roderic, and aspired to the sole dominion of Ireland.

In prosecution of these views, he sent over a messenger to the earl of Strigul, challenging the performance of his promise, and displaying the mighty advantages which might now be reaped from a reinforcement of warlike troops from England. Strongbow first sent over Raymond, one of his retinue, with ten knights and seventy archers,

archers, who, landing near Waterford, defeated a body of three thousand Irish that had ventured to attack him; and as Richard himself, who brought over two hundred horse, and a body of archers, joined them, a few days after, the victorious English made themselves masters of Waterford, and proceeded to Dublin, which was taken by assault. Roderic, in revenge, cut off the head of Dermot's natural son, who had been left as a hostage in his hands; and Richard, marrying Eva, became soon after, by the death of Dermot, master of the kingdom of Leinster, and prepared to extend his authority over all Ireland. Roderic and the other Irish princes, alarmed at the danger, and combining together, besieged Dublin with an army of thirty thousand men: but earl Richard, making a sudden sally at the head of ninety knights, with their followers, put this numerous army to rout, chased them off the field, and pursued them with great slaughter.

Henry, jealous of the progress of his own subjects, sent orders to recall the English, and himself landed in Ireland, at the head of five hundred knights. The adventurers appeased him by offering to hold their acquisitions in vassalage to his majesty; and the spirits of the Irish being broken, nothing remained but to receive their submission. The whole island was formally annexed to the English crown; and Henry after a few months stay, returned in triumph to England.

The legates to whom was committed the trial of his conduct in the murder of Becket, soon summoned him into Normandy, under the most awful threats of papal wrath, if he protracted his

appearance

appearance before them. By ample concessions and explanations, he was so fortunate as to conclude an accommodation with them; but the terms were little favourable to his own dignity or the interests of his people.

Delivered from this dangerous controversy, the domestic and political prosperity of Henry seemed firmly established: a numerous progeny gave lustre and authority to his crown; and his precaution in settling the several branches of his family, seemed well calculated to prevent all jealousy among the brothers, and to perpetuate the greatness of his family. He had appointed Henry, his eldest son, to be his successor in the kingdom of England, the dutchy of Normandy, and the counties of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine; territories which lay contiguous, and which, by those means, might easily lend to each other mutual assistance, both against intestine commotions and foreign invasions. Richard, his second son, was invested in the dutchy of Guienne and county of Poictou; Geoffrey, his third son, inherited, in right of his wife, the dutchy of Brittany; and the new conquest of Ireland was destined for the appanage of John, his fourth son. He had also negotiated in favour of this last prince, a marriage with Adelais, the only daughter of Humbert, count of Savoy and Maurienne; and was to receive as her dowry, considerable demesnes in Piedmont, Savoy, Bresse, and Dauphiny. But this exaltation of his family excited the jealousy of all his neighbours, who made those very sons, whose fortunes he had so anxiously established, the means of embittering his future life, and disturbing his government.

A. D. 1173. In a visit to Paris, the ambition of young Henry had been inflamed by the arts of his father-in-law. He was persuaded by Lewis, that by the ceremony of coronation, in the life of his father, he was intitled to sovereignty. In consequence of these extravagant ideas, the prince demanded the immediate possession of England or of Normandy. The uneasiness of Henry at this claim was increased by the conduct of his queen Eleanor, who was not less troublesome to her present husband by her jealousy, in regard to the fair Rosamond and others, than she had been to her former by her gallantries. Her younger sons Geoffrey and Richard participating in her discontents, escaped to France, and in imitation of their brother, required the independent administration of the territories that had been assigned them; and Europe saw with astonishment three boys scarcely arrived at puberty, pretend to dethrone their father, a monarch in the full vigour of his age and plenitude of his power.

In this dilemma, however reluctantly, Henry had recourse to Rome; but though Alexander, well pleased to exert his power in so justifiable a cause, launched against the enemies of the king the thunders of the Vatican, it was soon found these weapons had not the same force as when employed in a spiritual controversy; and Henry was reduced to seek more effectual auxiliaries, in the tribes of banditti, who, under the names of Brebancons, or Cottereaux, proffered their swords to the most liberal employer.

At the head of twenty thousand of these hardy but lawless ruffians, and the few troops that he had brought from Ireland, the king of England marched

marched to the relief of Verneuil, which the king of France had invested in conjunction with the younger Henry. He was prevailed with to listen to an insidious offer of accommodation, while the garrison was obliged to surrender: he avenged, however, the fraud, by a successful attack on the rear of the French; crushed the insurgents in Brittany; and continued his negotiations in the midst of victory. Though he insisted on retaining the sovereign authority in all his dominions, he offered his undutiful sons the most liberal revenues; but his terms were rejected by the confedcrates, who depended on the league they had concerted with the king of Scotland, and several of the most powerful barons of England.

In consequence of that league, the king of Scotland broke into the northern provinces with a great army of eighty thousand men; which, though undisciplined and disorderly, and better fitted for committing devastation than for executing any military enterprise, was become dangerous from the present factious and turbulent spirit of the kingdom. Henry, who had baffled all his enemies in France, and put his frontiers in a posture of defence, now found England the seat of danger; and determined to turn his immediate attention to that quarter. He landed at Southampton; and knowing the influence of superstition over the minds of the people, he hastened to Canterbury, in order to make atonement to the canonized ashes of Thomas à Becket. As soon as he came within sight of the church of Canterbury, he dismounted, walked barefoot towards it, prostrated himself before the shrine of the saint; and having assembled

sembled a chapter of the monks, disrobed himself before them, put a scourge of discipline into the hands of each, and presented his bare shoulders to the lashes which these ecclesiastics successively inflicted upon him. Next day he received absolution; and departing for London, soon after received the agreeable intelligence of a great victory, which his generals had obtained over the Scots, in which William their king was taken prisoner; and which being gained, as was reported, on the very day of his absolution, was regarded as the earnest of his final reconciliation with Heaven, and with Thomas à Becket.

This victory was decisive in favour of Henry; the English conspirators threw themselves on the king's mercy; and in a few weeks, the kingdom was restored to tranquillity. Henry immediately hastened to the defence of his Norman dominions; his presence saved Rouen, which had been besieged, and nearly surprised by the French; and Lewis, who dreaded that he might improve his successes, and penetrate into the heart of France, consented to a cessation of arms, and engaged with sincerity in a treaty of peace.

This was accompanied by a reconciliation between Henry and his sons. The conditions they obtained were less advantageous than those which had been formerly offered them. Pensions for their support, and some castles for their residence, together with an indemnity for their adherents, were the only indulgences granted them.

Of those, who had embraced the cause of the young princes, the king of Scotland was the principal

principal loser. Henry delivered from confinement, without exacting any ransom, about nine hundred knights whom he had taken prisoners; but it cost William the ancient independency of his crown as the price of his liberty. He stipulated to do homage to Henry for Scotland and all his other possessions; and that the fortresses of Edinburgh, Stirling, Berwick, Roxborough, and Jedburgh, should be delivered into Henry's hands, till the performance of articles. This severe and humiliating treaty was executed in its full rigour. He engaged the king and states of Scotland to make a perpetual cession of the fortresses of Berwick, and Roxborough, and to allow the castle of Edinburgh to remain in his hands, for a limited time. This was the first great ascendant which England obtained over Scotland; and indeed the first important transaction which had passed between the kingdoms.

A. D. 1175.

The interval of peace was assiduously employed by Henry in the civil administration of his kingdom. He enacted severe penalties against robbery, murder, counterfeiting the coin, and arson; and made many other beneficial regulations for restraining violence and injustice. He partitioned England into four divisions, and appointed itinerant justices, who were either prelates or noblemen, to go the circuit in each division; and that there might be fewer obstacles to the execution of justice, he was vigilant in demolishing all the new erected castles of the nobility.

He obliged all his subjects to put themselves in a posture of defence: every man possessed of a knight's fee was ordained to have for each fee a coat of mail, an helmet, a shield, and a lance; every

every free layman, possessed of goods to the value of sixteen marks, was to be armed in like manner; and every one that possessed ten marks was obliged to have an iron gorget, a cap of iron, a lance, and a coat quilted with wool or flax.

A. D. 1180. Henry's military reputation was now so well established, that his neighbours for several years ceased to molest him; but Philip, who filled the throne of France, encouraging the undutiful behaviour of the young princes of England, their father was once more obliged to take the field. The intrigues of prince Henry, however, were broken by the stroke of death: he was seized with a fever at Martel, a castle near Turenne, to which he had returned in discontent. Conscious of his approaching dissolution, he sent a message to his father, who was not far distant; expressed his contrition for his faults; and intreated the favour of a visit. Henry, apprehensive that his sickness was feigned, durst not trust himself in his hands; but when he received intelligence of his death, he was affected with the deepest sorrow; he fainted away; accused his own hard-heartedness in refusing his request; and lamented that he had deprived him of the opportunity of pouring out his soul in the bosom of his reconciled and affectionate father.

A. D. 1183. It was the hard fate of Henry, ever to meet with ingratitude where he most deserved love. Richard being now heir to all his dominions, the king intended that John, his third surviving son and favourite, should inherit Guienne as his appanage: but Richard refused his consent, fled into that dutchy, and even made preparations for carrying on

on war, as well against his father as against his brother Geoffrey, who was put in possession of Brittany. By the intercession of the queen, this business was accommodated; but immediately after, Geoffrey, the most vicious perhaps of all Henry's unhappy family, broke out into violence; demanded Anjou to be annexed to his dominions of Brittany; and on meeting with a refusal, fled to the court of France, and levied forces against his father. Henry was freed from this danger by his son's death, who was killed in a tournament at Paris. The widow of Geoffrey, soon after his decease, was delivered of a son, who received the name of Arthur, and was invested in the dutchy of Brittany, under the guardianship of his grandfather, who, as duke of Normandy, was also superior lord of that territory.

About this time, Saladin had extended his conquests over the east; had reduced Jerusalem; and almost entirely subdued the kingdom of Antioch. The western christians were confounded at receiving this dismal intelligence: the general cry was, that they were unworthy of an inheritance in heaven, who did not vindicate from the infidels, the inheritance of God on earth. Henry and Philip, forgetting their jealousies, were prevailed on to take the cross, and from their united efforts, the happiest effects were presaged.

But new obstacles soon presented themselves: Philip, jealous of Henry's power, entered into a secret confederacy with Richard, whose impatient temper aspired to immediate dominion; and demanded that the prince should espouse his sister Alice, to whom he A. D. 1189.

he had been already affianced; should be crowned king of England, and be invested immediately in his father's transmarine dominions. The refusal of Henry has been attributed by several historians, to his own passion for Alice; but he wanted not other weighty reasons to reject these terms. He had already experienced the fatal effects of crowning his eldest son; and he determined sooner to trust to the chance of war, than to subject himself again to a similar inconvenience.

The flame of discord being renewed, Ferté-Bernard fell into the hands of the enemy: Mans was next taken by assault; and Henry, who had thrown himself into that place, escaped with difficulty. Each day brought him accounts of the cowardice or infidelity of his governors; and his spirit, subdued by this reverse of fortune, submitted to the rigorous terms which, under the mediation of the duke of Burgundy, were offered to him.

The mortification, however, which Henry endured on this occasion, was increased by discovering, that his fourth son John, who had ever been his favourite, had secretly entered into the unnatural confederacy which Richard had formed against him. The unhappy father, already overloaded with cares and sorrows, finding his last disappointment in his domestic tenderness, broke out into expressions of the utmost despair; cursed the day on which he received his miserable being; and bestowed on his ungrateful children a malediction which he could never be prevailed on to retract. The agitation of his mind threw him into a lingering fever, of which he expired at the castle of Chinon, near Saumur, in the

the fifty-eighth year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign; and was buried at Fontevrard.

The character of Henry is as amiable in private life, as it is great in public. The chief blemish in it seems to have been his attachment to the fair; and two sons were the fruit of his amorous intercourse with the celebrated Rosamond, in whom he met with so much duty, that they appeared more like legitimate children, than those he had by his queen.

In his person, Henry was of a middle stature, strong, and well proportioned: his countenance was lively and engaging; his conversation affable and entertaining; his elocution easy and persuasive. He loved peace, but possessed both bravery and conduct in war; was provident without timidity; severe in the execution of justice, without rigour; and temperate without austerity. His affections as well as his enmities were warm and durable; and his long experience of the ingratitude and infidelity of man, never destroyed the natural sensibility of his temper, which disposed him to friendship and society.

Henry left only two legitimate sons; Richard who succeeded him, and John, who inheriting no territory, was from thence commonly denominated Lackland. Of his three daughters, Maud married Henry duke of Saxony; Eleanor, Alphonso king of Castile; and Isen, William king of Sicily; but from these alliances, no events arose which deserve particular mention.

A. D. 1189.

Richard, conscious that his unnatural conduct had hastened the dissolution of his father, expressed the strongest remorse, when it was too late. He turned with

 disgust

disgust from those who had encouraged him in his rebellion, and imparted his confidence to the faithful ministers of Henry, who had opposed his ambitious projects.

The love of military glory was his ruling passion, and he was ardent to acquire it. By the recovery of Jerusalem from the Saracens, his zeal against the infidels was communicated to his subjects, and broke out on a wrong object, on the very day of his coronation. Some Jews having presumed, contrary to the orders of the king, to appear in the hall where he was crowned, they were dragged forth, and put to death, and vengeance fell upon their innocent brethren. Instantly their houses were broken open, their effects plundered, and themselves slaughtered. The same bloody persecution was excited against them in York as in London; and all inquiry was precluded, by the rank and influence of the offenders.

Richard was solicitous about nothing, except raising supplies for the expedition he meditated. For that purpose he put to sale the revenues and manors of the crown, and the offices of greatest trust and power. He yielded up for ten thousand marks, the vassalage of Scotland, with the fortresses of Roxborough and Berwick. He scrupled not to declare he would sell London itself, could he find a purchaser; and having left the administration in the hands of Hugh bishop of Durham, and of Longchamp bishop of Ely, accompanied by all the military and fiery spirits of the age, he set out for the frontiers of Burgundy, where he had engaged to meet the French king.

In

In the plains of Vezelay, Richard and Philip reviewed their forces, and repeated their vows of friendship. They then separated; the former embarked at Marseilles, the latter at Genoa, and nearly about the same time gained Messina, where they were detained during the winter. In these quarters, several quarrels broke out between the troops of the different nations; and these were communicated to the two kings, by Richard's refusing to marry Alice, the sister of Philip, and giving his hand to Berengaria, daughter of Sanchez, king of Navarre. Waving immediate jealousies, however, they proceeded to the Holy Land, where their arrival inspired new life into the christians. A. D. 1190.

The siege of Acre, which had long been formed, was pressed with redoubled ardour. But the harmony of the chiefs was of short duration; the title of king of Jerusalem was disputed by Guy of Lusignan, and Conrade marquis of Montserrat. The former was supported by Richard, the latter by Philip; and the opposite views of these great monarchs brought faction and dissention into the christian army. The distress of the garrison, however, allowed them not to avail themselves of these distractions; and famine compelled the Saracens to open the gates of Acre.

On the surrender of this place, Philip declared his resolution of returning to France, under the plea of a bad state of health. He left, however, to Richard, ten thousand troops, under the command of the duke of Burgundy, and engaged by oath, not to commence hostilities against that prince's dominions during his absence; but he had no sooner reached home, than he pro-

 ceeded,

ceeded, though secretly, in a project which the present situation of England rendered inviting.

An open jealousy had broke out between Longchamp and the bishop of Durham, whom Richard had intrusted with the administration of that kingdom. The first, armed with the legatine power, hesitated not to arrest his colleague; and at length had the temerity to throw into prison, Geoffrey archbishop of York. This last act roused from his inactivity prince John, who summoned the guardian before a council of the nobility and prelates. Longchamp, conscious of his error, fled beyond seas, and though deprived of his office of chancellor and justiciary, A. D. 1192. in his quality of legate, he continued still to disturb the government. Philip not only promoted his intrigues, but entered into a correspondence with John; and promising him the hand of his sister Alice, excited him to seize Richard's transmarine dominions; from which enterprise he was with difficulty deterred by the vigilance of his mother, and the menaces of the council.

A. D. 1192. In the mean time, Richard was gathering laurels in the east. He defeated Saladin with the slaughter of forty thousand infidels; he recovered Ascalon, and advanced within sight of Jerusalem; but long absence, fatigue and want, had abated the ardour of the crusaders. Every one, except the king of England, expressed a desire of returning into Europe. Richard was forced to yield to their importunities; and he concluded a truce with Saladin, by which the christians were left in possession of Acre, and were allowed a free pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Richard,

Richard, acquainted with the intrigues of Philip, ventured not, on his return, to pass through France; he sailed therefore to the Adriatic; and being shipwrecked near Aquileia, endeavoured, in disguise, to pursue his route through Germany. At Vienna he was arrested by the orders of the duke of Austria, to whom he had given some disgust at the siege of Acre, and by that prince was sold to the emperor Henry VI. who affected to consider him as an enemy, on account of an alliance he had contracted with Tancred king of Sicily.

While Richard, whose renown had filled the world, languished in a dungeon loaded with irons, the king of France prepared to avail himself of his misfortunes. A. D. 1193. Amidst the general distraction which the intelligence had occasioned in England, prince John had escaped to the continent, and had concluded a treaty with Philip, by which he stipulated to deliver to the latter a great part of Normandy, and received in return the investiture of all Richard's transmarine dominions.

Philip immediately invaded Normandy; but though, by the treachery of John's adherents, he overran a great part of it, by the gallantry of the earl of Leicester he was repulsed from the walls of Rouen. Nor was John more successful in his attempt in England: though he made himself master of the castles of Windsor and Wallingford, he found the barons and people every where averse to his cause; in consequence of which he was obliged to retire again to France.

During these transactions, Richard, in Germany, suffered every kind of insult and indignity; but

but at length the emperor was prevailed on to restore him to his freedom, on receiving about 300,000l. of our present money.

A. D. 1194. Part of this was to be immediately paid, and for the rest, hostages were to be given. To raise this sum, twenty shillings were levied on each knight's fee in England; and Richard, having recovered his liberty, by complying with the terms agreed on, was crowned anew at Winchester, as if he intended to wipe off the ignominy of captivity.

As soon as Philip heard of the king's deliverance, he wrote to his confederate John in these terms: "Take care of yourself—the devil is broken loose." The latter, however, anxious to disengage himself from an associate whose fortunes seemed declining, threw himself at the feet of his brother, and implored his mercy. "I forgive you," said the king, "and hope I shall as easily forget your injuries, as you will my pardon;" an expression which shewed the just estimate he had made of John's disingenuous heart.

During five years from the return of Richard, the mutual weakness and enmity of the kings of France and England engaged them in a series of faithless negotiations, and desultory warfare; and the cardinal of St. Mary, the pope's legate, had endeavoured to change a truce for five years, into a more durable peace, when the design was rendered abortive by the death of Richard.

To extort from Vidomar, viscount of Limoges, a treasure which he had found, Richard, as superior lord, had besieged that nobleman in the castle of Chalos. As he approached to survey

vey the works, one Bertrand de Gourdon, an archer, pierced his shoulder with an arrow. On this the king gave orders for the assault; took the place, and hanged all the garrison, except Gourdon, whom he reserved as an object on whom he might wreak all that vengeance could dictate.

The wound being rendered mortal by the unskilfulness of the surgeon; and the king, sensible that he was drawing near an end, sent for Gourdon: "Wretch," said he, "what have I ever done to you, to induce you to seek my life?"—"You have," replied the prisoner, "killed with your own hands, my father and my two brothers: I am now in your power; you may inflict the severest torments on me, but I shall endure them with pleasure, provided I can think I have been so happy as to deliver the world from such a nuisance." The mind of Richard was softened by the approach of death, and the magnanimity of Gourdon: he ordered him to be released, and a sum of money to be given to him; but one of Richard's generals, privately seizing the unhappy man, flayed him alive, and then hanged him.

Thus died Richard, in the tenth year of his reign, and forty-second of his age, and was buried at Fonteverard. Though some marks of his poetical genius remain, the most shining parts of his character are his military talents, and his personal courage, which gained him the appellation of "Cœur de Lion," or "the Lionhearted." He left behind him no issue; and, by his last will, he declared John heir to all his dominions, though by a formal deed, before he embarked for A. D. 1199.

for the Holy Land, he had named, as his successor, his nephew, Arthur duke of Brittany, the son of Geoffrey, the elder brother of John, who was now only twelve years of age.

The king of France, and the barons of the transmarine provinces, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, declared in favour of Arthur, against whom John, after being acknowledged in Normandy and England, prepared to carry on the war vigorously. The selfish intriguing character of Philip facilitated his progress more than the force of his arms. Constantia the mother of Arthur, more apprehensive of a faithless ally than of an open enemy, secretly carried off her son from Paris, put him into the hands of his uncle, restored the provinces which had adhered to him, and made him do homage for the dutchy of Brittany, which was regarded as a fief of Normandy.

As Philip, after this incident, could not expect to carry on the war with success, he consented to a treaty with John, in which the limits of their territories were adjusted; and, to render their union more permanent, the king of England gave his niece, Blanche of Castile, in marriage to prince Lewis, Philip's eldest son, and with her the baronies of Issoudun and Graçai, and some other fiefs in Berri.

A. D. 1200. Thus secure, as he imagined, on the side of France, John indulged his passion for Isabella, the daughter of the count of Angouleme. Though his queen was still alive, and Isabella was betrothed to the count of Marche, the ardour of the king overcame every obstacle; he prevailed on the count of Angouleme to carry off his daughter from

her

her husband; and having procured a divorce from his wife, he espoused Isabella, regardless of the menaces of the pope, and the general censure of mankind.

The resentment of the count of Marche, secretly excited to arms the malcontents of Poictou and Normandy; and when John crossed the seas, he found he had not only his own subjects to contend with, but the power of France. Dangers multiplied on every side: his barons were disaffected, and the duke of Brittany, who was rising to man's estate, joined the king of France and the revolted nobles. Impatient of military renown, the young prince had entered Poictou with a small army, and had invested the queen dowager Eleanor, in Mirabeau, when he was surprised in his camp by John, his troops dispersed, and himself made prisoner. Fearful of his escape, the cruel tyrant, John, ordered him to be dispatched; but when he found his commands had not been obeyed, he stabbed him with his own hands, and threw his dead body into the Seine.

A. D. 1201.

All men were struck with horror at this cruel deed; and as John had in his hands Eleanor, the sister to Arthur, the Britons chose for their sovereign Alice, the younger daughter of Constantia by a second marriage. They solicited the assistance of Philip, who received their application with pleasure; summoned John to a trial; and on his non-appearance, declared him to have forfeited to his superior lord, all his fiefs in France.

Nor was this a vain threat. Philip extended his conquests along the banks of the Loire, while

while John consumed his hours in pastimes and amusements in Rouen. "Let the French go on," said he, "I will retake in a day what it has cost them years to acquire." Yet instead of fulfilling his vaunt, he meanly claimed the protection of the Roman pontiff; but Philip, instead of retiring at the command of

A. D. 1204. the pope's legates, laid siege to Chateau Gaillard, the most considerable fortress on the frontiers of Normandy; which being taken in a night assault, Rouen alone maintained some resistance, and the citizens demanded thirty days to advertise their prince of their danger. Upon the expiration of that term they opened their gates; and Philip, not satisfied with this acquisition, carried his victorious arms into the western provinces, and soon reduced Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and part of Poictou.

A. D. 1206. To recover his transmarine dominions, John landed with a considerable army at Rochelle: but, on the approach of Philip, he deserted his troops, and returned to England covered with shame; and though he obtained a short respite from war, by a truce for two years with the French monarch, that interval was still more disgraceful to him, by the alternate weakness and despotism of his government, and by the encroachments and arrogance of the church.

A. D. 1207. Innocent the third, a lofty and enterprising genius, availing himself of a dispute which had arisen from an irregular election for the see of Canterbury, claimed the right of nominating the primate of England. He commanded the monks or canons of Christ-church, who had hitherto possessed

sessed that important privilege, to choose, on pain of excommunication, cardinal Langton, an Englishman by birth, but warmly attached to the see of Rome. In vain the monks represented, that an election, without a previous writ from the king, would be highly irregular: one only had the courage to persevere in his opposition; the rest, overcome by the menaces of the pope, complied with his mandate.

John, inflamed with the utmost rage when he heard of this interference of the court of Rome, expelled from the monastery the prior and the monks of Christ-church; and when threatened with the resentment of Innocent, he burst out into violent invectives, and swore if the pope presumed to lay his kingdom under an interdict, that he would send to him all the bishops and clergy in England, and confiscate all their estates. These sallies of passion, however, were far from shaking the resolution of the Roman pontiff, who, sensible that the king had lost the confidence of his people, fulminated against him the sentence of interdict.

The execution of that sentence was calculated to strike a superstitious people with the deepest awe. The nation was of a sudden deprived of all exterior exercise of its religion; the altars were despoiled of their ornaments; the dead, instead of being interred in consecrated ground, were thrown into ditches, or buried in the common fields; marriage was solemnized in the church-yards; and every circumstance carried symptoms of the most immediate apprehension of divine vengeance.

On the other hand, the king confiscated the estates of all the clergy who obeyed the interdict;

dict; and treated with the utmost rigour the adherents of the church of Rome. Though some of the clergy yielded to his threats, and celebrated divine service, they complied with reluctance, and were regarded both by themselves and the people, as men who sacrificed their consciences to their fears or their interest.

During this contest, the king attempted military expeditions against Scotland, against Ireland, and against the Welsh; and commonly prevailed more from the weakness of his enemies, than his own vigour or abilities; but the lustre of these enterprises was obscured by the tyranny of his government, and the licentiousness of his private conduct.

A. D. 1213. The court of Rome finding that the interdict had not produced the desired effect, determined to proceed to sentence of excommunication. John alarmed at this step, offered to acknowledge Langton as primate, and to restore the exiled clergy; but Langton insisting on full reparation for the rents of their confiscated estates, the king broke off the conference.

Without temporizing any longer, Innocent absolved John's subjects from their oaths of fidelity and allegiance; declared him to have forfeited, by his contumacy, his crown; and offered it to the king of France.

Philip could not withstand this tempting prize. He levied a great army, and collected in the ports of Normandy and Picardy one thousand seven hundred vessels. To oppose him, John assembled at Dover sixty thousand men; a force sufficient, had they been animated with zeal; but the minds of the common people were impressed

by

by superstition; and alienated by the arrogance of the tyrant. The difficulties of John, at this crisis, were augmented by his cowardice and incapacity. Instead of braving, he resolved to yield to the tempest; and in a conference with Pandulf, the pope's legate, he acquiesced in all the exorbitant demands of his master; and even passed a charter, in which he declared he had, for the remission of his own sins, resigned England and Ireland to God, to St. Peter and St. Paul, and to pope Innocent, and his successors in the apostolic chair; agreeing to hold those dominions as feudatories of the church of Rome, by the annual payment of a thousand marks. He did homage to Pandulf in the most abject manner; and paid part of the tribute, which he owed for his kingdom as the patrimony of St. Peter; while the legate, elated by the triumph of sacerdotal power, trampled on the money that was laid at his feet, as an earnest of the subjection of the kingdom.

The disgraceful tameness of John, however, had not entirely delivered him from danger. Philip heard with indignation that England was placed under the protection of the see of Rome; he complained of being frustrated in an expedition which had cost him so much money; and declared his intentions to persevere, notwithstanding the inhibitions of the legate. But the vigour and activity of the earl of Salisbury, John's natural brother, who commanded the English fleet, was more effectual than the menaces of Pandulf; he surprised the French vessels in their harbours; and by the destruction of the greater part of them, compelled Philip to abandon

abandon the enterprise, without the remuneration he expected.

A. D. 1214. To retaliate some of the injuries he had received, from the province of Poictu, which acknowledged his authority, John attempted to penetrate into France; but the intelligence of the decisive victory which Philip obtained at Bovines over one hundred and fifty thousand Germans, led by the emperor Otho, inspired him with humbler thoughts; his hopes were confined to ruling peaceably over England: but even this was denied him; and a more humiliating scene of calamity still awaited him.

The feudal system, which had long been established in England, gave such influence to the aristocracy, that the royal authority was in a great measure eclipsed by that of the nobles. When the conquest of England was achieved by William, the necessity of entrusting great power in the hands of a prince who was to maintain a military dominion over a vanquished nation, had engaged the Norman barons to submit to a more severe and absolute prerogative, than that to which men of similar rank were commonly subjected; and England, during a course of an hundred and fifty years, was governed by an authority unknown in the same degree, to all the kingdoms founded by the northern conquerors. Henry the first, that he might allure the people to exclude his elder brother Robert, had granted them a charter favourable in many particulars to their liberties; Stephen had renewed the grant; Henry the second had confirmed it; but the concessions of all these princes had remained a dead letter; when John, equally odious and

and contemptible, both in public and private life, provoked the people to form a general confederacy and vindicate their rights by arms.

Nothing forwarded this confederacy so much as the concurrence of Langton, archbishop of Canterbury; a man, whose memory, though he was obtruded on the nation by a palpable encroachment of the see of Rome, ought always to be respected by the English. This prelate formed the plan of reforming the government, and paved the way for it, by inserting a clause in the oath which he administered to the king, before he would absolve him from excommunication, "that he would re-establish the good laws of his predecessors, and abolish the wicked ones; and maintain justice and right in all his dominions." Soon after, he shewed to some of the barons a copy of the charter of Henry the first, which was nearly forgotten, and advised them to insist on its renewal. The barons swore they would lose their lives sooner than desist from so reasonable a demand: the confederacy spread wider; a more numerous meeting was summoned at St Edmond's Bury, under colour of devotion; and the members, inflamed by the eloquence of Langton, and incited by the sense of their own wrongs, took an oath before the altar, to adhere to each other, and to make endless war on the king, until he should submit to their demands.

On an appointed day, after having prepared themselves to maintain their engagements by arms, they appeared in London, and required the king, in consequence of his oath before the primate, to renew the charter of Henry, and confirm the laws of St. Edward: A. D. 1215.

ward: a delay was asked, and granted; and the interval was employed by John to influence the pope in his favour. Innocent, who foresaw that if the administration fell into the hands of an high-spirited nobility they would vindicate the independence of their country, while he advised the king to grant such demands as should appear reasonable, expressed his disapprobation of the conduct of the barons, and exhorted the prelates to interpose, to put an end to civil discord.

The barons heard, with more indifference than might have been expected, the displeasure of the court of Rome; and as soon as the time granted to the king was expired, they met at Stamford, and collected their forces, consisting of above two thousand knights, besides retainers and inferior persons without number. Elated with their power, they advanced in a body to Brackley, within twenty miles of Oxford, the place where the court then resided; and sent to the king a schedule containing their principal demands. John had no sooner perused it, than he burst into a furious passion, swearing he would never grant such privileges as must reduce himself to slavery.

The confederated nobles, informed of his answer, determined to rely on their swords; they besieged the castle of Northampton, were admitted into that of Bedford, occupied Ware, and entered London without opposition. They laid waste the royal parks and palaces, and compelled the other barons to join them, on pain of ravaging their estates. So formidable indeed were their menaces, and so universal the disaffection, that the king was left at Odiham in Hampshire with a retinue of only seven knights; and after in vain offering

offering to submit all differences to the pope, he found himself at last obliged to yield without reserve.

It was at Runnymede, between Windsor and Staines, a spot which will ever be celebrated in history, that a conference took place between John and his martial barons. After a debate of some days, the king, with a facility somewhat suspicious, signed and sealed the famous deed called MAGNA CHARTA, or the GREAT CHARTER, which granted or secured very important liberties to the clergy, the barons, and the people, though far short of what they have since freely and legitimately enjoyed. In short, many of the stipulations of the great charter, from the change of manners and institutions, appear at this day trivial or ridiculous; yet there can be no doubt but that it was a noble acquisition at the time it was passed. Its chief provisions were in favour of the nobility and the clergy; but to render the cause of the barons more popular, some salutary regulations were introduced for the protection of the lower classes.

To secure the execution of the charter, London was left in the hands of the barons, and the Tower was consigned to the custody of the primate. With the consent of the king, the confederates chose from their own body, twenty-five members, as conservators of the public liberty, to whose authority no limits were prescribed, either in extent or duration. All men throughout the kingdom were obliged, under the penalty of confiscation, to swear obedience to them: twelve knights from each county, chosen by the freeholders, were to make reports of such evil customs as required redress, conformable to the

tenor of the great charter; and this seems a very strong proof that the house of commons was not then in being, or such an unusual election would not have been necessary.

John, apparently submitted to all these regulations, however injurious to majesty; but he only awaited a proper opportunity for annulling his concessions. Retiring to the isle of Wight, he meditated the most fatal vengeance against his enemies. He secretly sent abroad his emissaries to invite the rapacious Brabançons into his service; he dispatched a messenger to Rome, to complain before that tribunal of the violence imposed upon him; and Innocent considering himself as feudal lord of the kingdom, issued a bull, by which he annulled the whole charter. He prohibited the barons from exacting the observance of it; he prohibited the king from paying any regard to it; and he pronounced a general sentence of excommunication against every one who should persevere in maintaining such iniquitous pretensions.

Under the sanction of this bull, * John, as soon as he had collected his foreign forces, threw off the mask. The barons, enticed into a fatal security, had taken no rational measures for reassembling their forces. The king was master of the field: his rapacious mercenaries were let loose against the estates, the tenants, the houses, and parks of the nobility; nothing was to be seen but the flames of villages, and castles reduced to ashes, and the consternation and misery of the inhabitants; while the king marching

* To the immortal honour of Langton, he refused to publish the papal mandate.

through

through the whole extent of England from Dover to Berwick, laid the provinces waste on each side of him, as if he had been in an enemy's country.

A. D. 1216.

The barons, reduced to this desperate extremity, employed a remedy no less desperate, and offered the king of France to acknowledge Lewis, his eldest son, as their sovereign, provided he would protect them from the violence of the tyrant.

The prospect of such a prize rendered Philip regardless to the menaces of the court of Rome, which threatened him with excommunication if he attacked a prince under the protection of the holy see; but he refused to intrust his son and their to the caprice of the English barons, without some pledge for his safety. He therefore demanded of them twenty-five of the most illustrious nobles; and no sooner had he received these hostages, than he sent over Lewis with a numerous army.

In consequence of that young prince's appearance in England, John's foreign troops, being mostly levied in Flanders, refused to serve against the heir of their monarchy. The barons either hastened to join the standard of Lewis, or throw open to him the gates of their castles. Dover alone resisted his arms. But the union between the English and the French was of short duration; the preference of Lewis to the latter, soon excited the jealousy of the former. A French nobleman, the viscount Melun, as it is said, revealed also on his death bed, to some of the English barons, who were his friends, the secret intentions of Lewis to exterminate them and their families. This story was universally reported

ported and believed: several of the nobles again deserted to John's party; and the French prince began to apprehend a sudden reverse of fortune. The king with a considerable army was advancing towards him; but passing from Lynn to Lincolnshire, his road lay along the sea shore, which being overflowed at high water, and not chusing the proper time for his march, he lost in the inundation all his carriages, treasure, baggage, and regalia. The affliction for this disaster, and vexation from the distracted state of affairs, increased an indisposition under which he then laboured; and though he reached the castle of Newark, he soon after gave up the ghost, and was buried at Worcester. He expired in the forty-ninth year of his age, and the eighteenth of his reign; leaving two legitimate sons, Henry and Richard, the eldest of whom was only nine years old.

The character of John, is a complication of vices equally mean and odious; cowardice, levity, licentiousness, ingratitude, treachery, and cruelty. It is hard to say whether his conduct as a son, a brother, husband, or a king, was most culpable. By his misconduct he lost the flourishing provinces of France, the ancient patrimony of his family; he subjected his kingdom to a shameful vassalage under the see of Rome; and he died when in danger of being totally expelled by a foreign power, or of falling into the hands of his subjects, whom he had rendered his most inveterate enemies.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The reigns of Henry III. *Edward* I. *and Edward* II.

A. D. 1216.

FORTUNATELY for Henry III. as well as for the kingdom at large, that able and loyal nobleman, the earl of Pembroke, was appointed protector of the realm, during the king's minority, by the general voice of the barons. That he might reconcile all men to the government of his pupil, he made him grant a new charter of liberties, in some measure altered from the former; but confirming all its leading stipulations. This was followed by a charter of forests; which declared offences committed in the king's forests no longer capital, but only punishable by fine and imprisonment.

The satisfaction which these charters diffused was soon felt by Lewis; the personal resentment of the barons to John was buried with him in the grave; their jealousy of their new allies had daily increased; a large detachment of the French had been routed near Lincoln; and their fleet had suffered a considerable defeat off the coast of Kent. These events determined the mal-contents, by an early submission to prevent those attainders to which they were exposed on account of their rebellion; and Lewis, whose cause was now totally desperate, readily consented to conclude a peace on honourable conditions, promising to evacuate the kingdom, and only stipulating in return, an indemnity to his adherents, and a restitution of their honours and fortunes.

The protector did not long survive the pacification

cification which had been chiefly owing to his wisdom and valour; and he was succeeded in the government by Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, and Hubert de Burgh, the justiciary. The counsels of the latter were chiefly followed; and had he possessed equal influence with Pembroke, he seemed to be every way worthy of filling the place of that virtuous nobleman. But the licentious and powerful barons, having broken the reins of subjection, could ill be restrained by laws under a minority: they held by force the royal castles; they usurped the king's demesnes; they oppressed their vassals; and protected the worst kind of banditti, in their robberies and extortions, in defiance of legal government.

A. D. 1222. Justice, however, was executed with great severity against disorders less criminal, because more unpremeditated. A quarrel had arisen between the Londoners and the inhabitants of Westminster in a match of wrestling. The former had pulled down some houses belonging to the abbot of Westminster; and in the tumult had made use of the cry commonly employed by the French troops. The justiciary made enquiry into the disorder; and finding one Constantine Fitz-Arnulf to have been the ringleader, he proceeded against him by martial law, and ordered him immediately to be hanged.

The low state indeed into which the crown was fallen, made it requisite for a good minister to be attentive to the preservation of the royal prerogatives, as well as the security of public liberty. Hubert therefore applied to the Pope to declare the king of full age. In consequence

quence of this declaration, he resigned into his hands the important fortresses of the Tower and Dover castle, which had been intrusted to his custody. Several of the most powerful barons, however, instead of imitating his example, formed the design of surprising London; but finding the king prepared for defence, they desisted; and being threatened with excommunication if they persisted in detaining the king's castles, they at length gave way, and surrendered up those fortresses.

As Henry approached to man's estate, his character became every day better known. Gentle, humane, and merciful, even to a fault, he appears to have been steady in nothing, but to have received every impression from those who surrounded him. Without activity or vigour, he was unfit to conduct war; without policy or art, he was ill calculated to maintain peace. His resentments, though hasty and violent, were not dreaded, while he was found to drop them with such facility; his friendships were little valued, because they were neither founded on selection, nor maintained with constancy. A. D. 1227.

That able and faithful minister Hubert de Burgh, in a sudden fit of caprice Henry threw off, and exposed to the most violent persecutions. Among other frivolous crimes, he was accused of gaining the king's affections by enchantments; he escaped to France, was recalled, and recovered a great share of the king's confidence, but was never reinstated in power or authority sufficient to enable him to do good.

His successor in the government of the king and kingdom, was Peter, bishop A. D. 1233.

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of Winchester, a Poictevin by birth, no less distinguished by his arbitrary principles, than by his abilities. He persuaded Henry to invite over a number of Poictevins, and other foreigners, whom he believed could be more safely trusted than the English; and these strangers soon exhausted the revenues of the crown, and invaded the rights of the people. A confederacy of the nobles against such odious favourites was broken by the address of Peter; the estates of the most obnoxious barons were confiscated, without a legal sentence or trial by their peers; and when to these proceedings the authority of the great charter was objected, Henry was wont to reply, "Why should I observe this charter, which is neglected by all my grandees, both prelates and nobility?" to which it was justly returned: "You ought, sir, to set them the example."

So violent an administration as that of the bishop of Winchester could not be of long duration; yet its fall proceeded from the church, not from the efforts of the nobles. Edmond the primate, attended by many other prelates, representing the pernicious measures of Peter, required the dismission of him, and that of his associates, under pain of excommunication. The menace was too formidable to be neglected; yet the English were not long free from the dominion of foreigners. The king having marriod Eleanor, daughter of the count of Provence, was surrounded by a great number of strangers from that country, whom he enriched by arbitrary exertions of prerogative, and by extorting loans from his most opulent subjects.

A. D. 1236.

The

The foreign enterprises of Henry were equally disgraceful with his domestic government. In a war with Lewis IX. he was stripped of what remained to him of Poictou. His want of economy reduced him to sell his plate and jewels. When this expedient was first proposed to him, he asked, where he should find purchasers? it was replied, the citizens of London. "On my word," said he, "these clowns, who assume to themselves the names of barons, abound in every thing, while we are reduced to necessities."

Severe as the grievances were under which the English laboured, from the faults of the king, they were considerably encreased by the usurpations and avarice of the court of Rome. About 1229, pope Honorius demanded, and obtained, the tenth of all ecclesiastical revenues. In the year 1240, Otho the legate wrested large sums from the prelates and convents, and is said to have carried more money out of the kingdom than he left; four years after the experiment was renewed by Mertu the nuncio: and the king, who relied on the pope for the support of his tottering authority, dared not resist these exactions.

A. D. 1247. Innocent III. was still more rapacious than his predecessors: by his influence he embarked Henry in a project for the conquest of Sicily; in which chimerical plan, after expending an immense sum of money, the king became sensible of the fallacy of the pope's professions and his own expectations. The earl of Cornwall the king's brother, who laughed at this project, was, soon after its defeat, himself tempted to become a candidate for the

the imperial crown; and succeeded so far as to be chosen king of the Romans. Passing over into Germany, he carried with him the immense sum of seven hundred thousand marks: his money while it lasted procured him friends and partisans; but it was soon drained by the avidity of the German princes: and he returned to England, mortified at the reflection of having lavished away the frugality of a whole life, in the acquisition of an useless title.

A.D. 1255. The turbulence of the barons encreased with the wants of the king: and the parliament which seems to have had some authority in this reign, refused an aid, unless he would promise, at the same time, a redress of civil and ecclesiastical grievances; and engage from henceforth to preserve the great charter inviolate. This he consented to, in the most solemn manner, but misled by his favourites, he soon restored to his usual courses.

A. D. 1258. A continuation of such imprudent measures encouraged Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, to attempt to wrest the sceptre from the feeble hand which held it. This nobleman had espoused Eleanor, dowager to William earl of Pembroke, and sister to the king. His address gained him the affections of all orders of men, but could not protect him against the levity of his sovereign. He had alternately enjoyed the favour, and been exposed to the hatred of Henry; and being too great to act subservient to the minions of that prince, he found more advantage in cultivating his interest with the public. He filled every place with complaints against the infringement of the great charter; and a quarrel which

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he had with William de Valence, the king's half brother, determined him to give full scope to his unbounded ambition. He secretly called a meeting of the most powerful barons, particularly Humphrey de Bohun, high constable, Roger Bigod earl Marischal and the earls of Warwick and Gloucester. To these he depicted in glowing colours the oppressions exercised against the lower orders, the violation of the barons' privileges, and the continual depredations made on the clergy; and while he magnified the generosity of their ancestors, who at the expence of their blood had extorted the great charter from the crown, he lamented their own degeneracy, who allowed so important an advantage to be wrested from them by a weak prince, and insolent parasites.

These topics being well suited to the sentiments of the company, the barons embraced a resolution of redresssing the public grievances, by taking into their own hands the administration of government. They entered the parliament clad in complete armour, with their swords by their sides; and when the king, struck with their unusual appearance, asked, whether they intended to make him prisoner? Roger de Bigod replied for the rest, "That he was not their prisoner but their sovereign; but as he had frequently, after acknowledging his errors, allowed himself to be carried into the same path, he must now yield to more strict regulations, and confer authority on those who were willing and able to redress the national grievances." Henry, partly allured by the hopes of a supply, and partly intimidated at the martial appearance of the barons, acquiesced,

esced, and summoned another parliament at Oxford, in order to digest the new plan of government.

This parliament, which from the confusion that attended its measures, was afterwards denominated the "mad parliament," chose twelve barons, to whom were added twelve more from the king's ministers. To these twenty-four, unlimited authority was granted; and as Leicester was at the head of this council, all their measures were taken by his influence; they ordered four knights to be chosen by each county, who were to report the grievances of the people to the parliament; they appointed three sessions of parliament to be held regularly every year; that a new sheriff should be annually elected by the votes of the freeholders in each county; that no heirs should be committed to the wardships of foreigners; and no castles intrusted to their custody; and that no new warrens or forests should be erected, nor the revenues of any counties or hundreds be let to farm.

These regulations perhaps might have been warranted by the circumstances of the times, but they afterwards proceeded to the most unjustifiable lengths. They displaced all the chief officers of the crown, and advanced either themselves or their own creatures in their place. They compelled every man to swear that he would obey and execute the mandates of the twenty-four barons; and they chose a committee of twelve, who during the intervals of the sessions were to possess the whole authority of parliament.

But the stream of popularity was now rapidly turning

turning against them; and whatever support they might have derived from the private power of their families, was weakened by their intestine jealousies. A violent enmity broke out between the earls of Leicester and Gloucester; the latter was desirous of moderating the career of the barons; but the former, enraged at the opposition he met with in his own party, pretended to throw up all concerns in English affairs, and retired into France.

A. D. 1263.

The earl of Gloucester dying soon after, Leicester entered into a confederacy with Llewellyn prince of Wales; and no sooner did he understand that prince Edward had marched to oppose the Welsh, than he secretly passed over into England, collected his friends, and commenced an open rebellion.

In London he had many partizans; and the populace, encouraged by Thomas Fitz-Richard, the mayor, soon rose in insurrection. The lust of plunder and destruction first prompted them to attack the Jews, who were pillaged and massacred to the number of five hundred persons. The Lombard bankers and rich citizens were the next victims to their rapacity; even the queen scarcely escaped their rage; whom they intended to have removed by water from the Tower to the castle of Windsor; but the popular cry was, "drown the witch!" the multitude assembled with large stones on the bridge to sink her barge; and her fears induced her to return to the Tower.

The earl of Leicester was now not only master of London, but in a parley he had seized the person of prince Edward, the life and soul of the royal party. This misfortune determined the

the king to seek an accommodation; he agreed to confirm the provisions of Oxford; and he reinstated the barons in the sovereignty of the kingdom. The latter immediately summoned a parliament to meet at Westminster in order to settle their government; and in that assembly they insisted that the authority of the twenty-four barons should continue, not only during the reign of the king, but also during that of prince Edward. The heir apparent, however, having recovered his liberty by the late treaty, employed his activity in defending the prerogatives of his family. The number of his friends, and the clamour of the people for peace, obliged the earl of Leicester to consent to a second negociation; and it was agreed by both sides to submit their differences to the arbitration of the king of France.

This virtuous prince had never ceased to interpose his good offices between the English factions; and at Amiens, in the presence of the states of France, of the king of England, and of Peter de Montfort, Leicester's son, he brought this great cause to a trial. He annulled the provisions of Oxford, restored the king to the possession of his castles, and to the nomination of the great offices; but he ordered at the same time a general amnesty should be granted for all past offences; and declared that his award was in no wise meant to derogate from the privileges and liberties which the nation enjoyed by any former charters. But the sentence was rejected by Leicester and his associates; and they resolved to have recourse to arms, in which they were supported by the city of London.

A. D. 1264.

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The king and the prince finding a civil war inevitable, summoned to their standard their friends and vassals; while Leinster having been reinforced by a great body of Londoners, determined to stake the fate of the nation on a decisive engagement.

His talents for war were displayed in the skill and secrecy of his march; and he had nearly surprised the royalists in their quarters at Lewes in Sussex; but this negligence was repaired by the activity of prince Edward, who marshalled the army of the king. With the van he rushed upon the Londoners, who from their ignorance of discipline, and want of experience, were ill fitted to resist the ardour of Edward and his martial companions: they were broken in an instant, and chaced off the field for many miles. But when Edward returned from the pursuit in triumph, he was astonished to find the ground covered with the dead bodies of his friends. During his absence, Leicester had attacked, and defeated the main body commanded by Henry and the king of the Romans; and had taken both those princes prisoners. Edward, intrepid amidst the greatest disasters, in vain exhorted his followers to revenge the death of their friends, and relieve the royal captives; they were dejected by this unexpected reverse of fortune; and the earl of Warrenne, and several other noblemen, hastened to the sea coast, and escaped to the continent.

No farther resource appearing for the royal party, the prince was obliged to submit to Leicester's terms, which were laconic and severe. He stipulated that Edward, and Henry d'Allmaine, the son of the king of the Romans, should surrender themselves pledges, in lieu of the two

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kings: that all other prisoners on both sides should be released: and that, under the direction of the king of France, three persons should be chosen to make what regulations they should deem necessary for the settlement of the kingdom.

The prince and Henry d'Allmaine accordingly delivered themselves into Leicester's hands, who sent them under a guard to Dover castle; but he had no sooner got the whole royal family in his power, than he openly violated every article of the treaty, and acted as the sole master, and even tyrant of the kingdom. No farther mention was made of the reference to the king of France: and though Leicester summoned a parliament, it was entirely composed of his own dependants, who voted the royal power should be exercised by a council of nine persons, who were to be chosen and removed by the majority of three, Leicester himself, the young earl of Gloucester, and the bishop of Chichester.

By this step the sceptre was really placed in the hands of Leicester, as he had the entire direction of the bishop of Chichester. But sensible of the precipice on which he stood, in order to ingratiate himself still farther with the people, he summoned a new parliament in London. Besides the barons of his own party, and several ecclesiastics, he ordered returns to be made of two knights from each shire, and, what is more remarkable, of deputies from the boroughs; an order of men, which in former ages had always been regarded as too mean to enjoy a place in the national councils. This period is commonly esteemed the epoch of the house of commons in England; and it is certainly

A. D. 1265.

certainly the first time that historians speak of any representatives being sent to parliament by the boroughs.

Having thus assembled a parliament after his own model, and trusting to the attachment of the populace of London, Leicester seized the opportunity of crushing every rival. Even the earl of Gloucester found himself in danger from the prevailing authority of his ancient confederate, and retired from the capital. This known dissention encouraged the enemies of Leicester; and the general wish that the gallant Edward should be released, who had languished in prison ever since the battle of Lewes, reduced him to assume the appearance of moderation. On the prince ordering his adherents to deliver up all his castles, and swearing neither to depart the kingdom, nor introduce into it any foreign forces, he was declared free by the barons; but instead of really recovering his liberty, he found himself closely watched by the emissaries of Leicester, whose faction reaped all the advantage of this new treaty.

As Gloucester had retired for safety to his estates on the borders of Wales, Leicester followed him with an army to Hereford, and carried the king and young prince along with him. It was here Gloucester concerted with young Edward the manner of that prince's escape. He furnished him with a swift horse, and placed in the vicinity a small party to guard him to a place of safety. Edward pretending to take the air with some of his guards, and making matches between their horses until he thought he had tired them, suddenly mounted Gloucester's horse, bade them adieu,

adieu, and reached his friends, who impatiently waited his arrival.

The royalists, secretly prepared for this event, immediately flew to arms; and Leicester finding himself in a remote quarter of the kingdom, surrounded by his enemies, and barred from all communication with his friends by the Severn, whose bridges Edward had broken down, wrote to his son Simon de Montfort, to hasten from London with an army for his relief. Simon had advanced to Kenilworth with that view, where, fancying that all Edward's force and attention were directed against his father, he lay secure and unguarded; but the prince, making a sudden and forced march, surprised him in his camp, dispersed his army, and took the earl of Oxford and many other noblemen prisoners, almost without resistance. Leicester, ignorant of his son's fate, passed the Severn in boats, during Edward's absence, and lay at Evesham, in expectation of being every hour joined by his friends from London: when the prince, who availed himself of every favourable moment, appeared in the field before him. The battle immediately began, though on very unequal terms. Leicester's army, by living on the mountains of Wales without bread, which was not then much used among the inhabitants, had been extremely weakened by sickness and desertion, and was soon broken by the victorious royalists; while his Welsh allies, accustomed only to a desultory kind of war, immediately took to flight, and were pursued with great slaughter. Leicester himself, asking for quarter, was slain in the heat of action, with his eldest son Henry, Hugh le Despenser,

penser, and about an hundred and sixty knights, and many other gentlemen of his party. The old king had been purposely placed by the rebels in the front of the battle; and being clad in armour, and thereby not known by friends, he received a wound, and was in danger of his life: but crying out, "I am Henry of Winchester, your king," he was rescued from impending danger, and carried to a place of safety.

A. D. 1266.

The victory at Evesham proved decisive in favour of the royalists; but they used it with great moderation. The great charter remained inviolate: and the king was careful to abstain from all those exertions of power, which had afforded so plausible a pretence to the rebels. His clemency was extended even to his most inveterate enemies; and the earl of Gloucester, whose youth and temerity prompted him, on some new disgust, to rekindle the flames of rebellion, found a ready pardon in the memory of his former services.

A. D. 1270.

Prince Edward finding the state of the kingdom tolerably composed, was impelled, by his avidity for glory, and by the solicitations of the king of France, to undertake an expedition against the infidels in the Holy Land. He carried with him the earl of Gloucester: but when he arrived at Tunis, he found Lewis had sunk beneath the heat of the climate and the fatigues of the enterprise. Not discouraged, however, by this event, Edward pursued his voyage, and revived in the Holy Land the glory of the English name.

Meanwhile his absence from England was productive of the most fatal consequences; the laws were not executed; the barons oppressed the

the common people, and the populace of London returned to their usual licenciousness. The old king, unequal to the burthen of public affairs, anxiously importuned his gallant son to return, and to assist him in swaying the sceptre. At last, overcome by the cares of government, and the infirmities of age, Henry expired at St. Edmond's Bury, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, and the fifty-sixth of his reign, leaving two sons, Edward his successor, and Edmond earl of Lancaster; and two daughters, Margaret queen of Scotland, and Beatrix dutchess of Brittany.

The character of this prince may be sufficiently collected from the history of his reign. He was alternately timid and rash, easy and over-bearing, avaricious and a spendthrift. On the Jews, he practised the most cruel extortions; and it seems the profits of usury, which was then fifty per cent. enabled them to bear repeated fleecings.

A. D. 1272. Edward had reached Sicily in his return from the Holy Land, where he had been wounded with a poisoned dagger, when he received intelligence of his father's death. Accompanied by his consort, the princess Eleanor of Castile, he proceeded to Paris, and did homage to Philip, for the dominions he held in France. He then advanced by slow journies to London, where he was received with the most joyful acclamations, and was solemnly crowned at Westminster, by Robert archbishop of Canterbury.

To correct the disorders which civil commotions had introduced, was the first object of the king's care. By a rigid execution of the laws, he gave protection to the inferior orders of state, and diminished the arbitrary power of the barons

rons. He appointed a commission to enquire into crimes of all kinds; and the Jews being generally accused of having adulterated the coin of the realm, Edward let loose on them the whole rigours of his justice. In London alone, two hundred and eighty of them were hanged at once; fifteen thousand were robbed of their effects, and banished the kingdom, and since that period they never have been so numerous in England.

A. D. 1276.

The active spirit of Edward could not long remain without employment. Llewellyn prince of Wales, refusing to do homage in person, Edward, impatient of his evasions, entered Wales with a numerous army; he pierced into the heart of the country; and surrounded Llewellyn, and the flower of the Welsh, on the hills of Snowdon; where being destitute of magazines, he was soon obliged to surrender at discretion. He did homage, and suffered his barons to swear fealty to the crown of England; besides relinquishing the country between Cheshire and the river Conway.

This peace, however, was not of long duration; the insolence of the English borderers, provoked the Welsh to rise again in arms; and Edward re-entered the country with a force too great for resistance. Llewellyn was surprised and slain, with two thousand of his followers; and his brother David, chased from hill to hill, was at last betrayed to the enemy. Edward sullied all his laurels, by bringing him to a formal trial before the peers of England; and ordering this sovereign prince to be hanged as a traitor, for defending by arms the liberties of his native country.

A. D. 1284. Intimidated by the fate of David, their hereditary prince, the Welsh nobility submitted; and the laws of England were established throughout the principality. Edward, however, sensible that nothing cherished military glory and virtue so much as traditional poetry, collected the Welsh bards, and from a barbarous policy, caused them to be put to death; an action which reflects eternal disgrace on his name.

It is said that Edward, in order to ingratiate himself with the Welsh, proposed to give them a prince, a Welshman by birth; and on their promise, he invested in the principality his son Edward, then an infant, who had been born at Caernarvon. Thus Wales was fully annexed to the crown; and henceforth gives a title to the eldest sons of the kings of England.

A. D. 1291. Edward now had leisure to attend to the affairs of Scotland: he contracted his son to Margaret, the heir to the Scottish crown; but the death of that princess, while yet an infant, broke all his measures; and the vacant throne was claimed both by John Baliol and Robert Bruce.

Both had numerous adherents; and in order to prevent a civil war, it was agreed on to call in the arbitration of the king of England. The temptation was too strong for the virtue of Edward; he purposed to lay hold of the present opportunity, to revive, or rather to create, a claim of a feudal superiority over Scotland. Accompanied by a great army, he invited the Scottish parliament and the competitors to attend him in the castle of Norham, on the southern bank of the Tweed. He informed them that he

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was come hither to do justice to all parties; and that he was entitled to this authority, not in virtue of the reference made to him, but in quality of liege lord of the kingdom.

The barons were moved with indignation at the injustice of this unexpected claim; but they found themselves betrayed into a situation, in which it was impossible for them to make any effectual defence; and Edward interpreting their silence into acquiescence, addressed himself to the competitors, and previous to his pronouncing sentence, required their acknowledgment of his superiority.

This being done, Edward after long deliberation pronounced in favour of Baliol; to whom, after receiving an oath of fealty to England, he delivered up the fortresses of Scotland; and if he had been satisfied with establishing the superiority of the English crown, he might have fixed his pretensions, and have left that important acquisition to his posterity; but he proceeded in such a manner as made it evident he aimed at the absolute dominion of the kingdom. He encouraged appeals to England; and obliged king John to appear at the bar of his parliament as a private person. Gentle as was the disposition of Baliol, it was exasperated by these indignities; he determined at all hazards to vindicate his liberties; and the war, which soon broke out between England and France, presented him with a favourable opportunity.

A. D. 1293.

A petty quarrel between a Norman and English sailor, had been speedily inflamed into a national enmity. A bloody war had been kindled at sea, in which, though the respective sovereigns had yet taken

no part, so numerous were the fleets engaged, that fifteen thousand Frenchmen are reported to have perished in one action. The affair was become too important to be neglected; Philip sent an envoy to demand reparation; which not being fully accorded, he summoned Edward as his vassal, to attend him in France; and on his refusal, declared all his estates in that kingdom forfeited.

By emptying the jails, Edward raised an army which he sent into Guienne; but these forces, though at first successful, were soon afterwards defeated with considerable slaughter; and England was at the same time menaced with an invasion from France and from Scotland, whose kings had entered into an alliance.

A. D. 1295. The union of these princes obliged Edward to carry on his preparations with vigour; and the expences with which they were attended, obliged him to have frequent recourse to parliaments, and to introduce into the public council, the lower orders of the state. Along with two knights of the shire, he enjoined the sheriff to send to parliament two deputies from each borough *; " as it is a most

* The charges of the deputies were borne by the borough which sent them; they sat apart from the barons and knights, who disdained to mix with such plebeian personages. After they had given their consent to the taxes required of them, they separated, even though the parliament continued to sit. But in process of time, it became customary for them, in return for the supplies they granted, to prefer petitions to the crown, for the redress of any particular grievance; and the king, by adding to them the sanction of his authority, bestowed validity on them. It was soon, however, discovered, that no laws could be fixed for one order of men without affecting the whole; and the

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equitable rule," says he, "that what concerns all, should be approved of by all, and common dangers be repelled by united efforts." This noble principle, seems to have laid the foundation of a free and equitable government; and from this epoch may be dated the regular establishment of the different branches of the house of commons, for the precedent of Leicester, in the former reign, was rather an act of violence than of authority,

A. D. 1296.

The popular form which Edward had given to the parliament, could not fail of procuring him a liberal supply; and he applied it, in making immediate preparations against the hostilities of his northern neighbours. He cited John to appear before him as his vassal, and on his refusal, he marched with thirty thousand foot, and four thousand horse to chastise his contumacy. Encouraged by the intrigues of Robert Bruce, and several Scottish noblemen, he crossed the Tweed, took Berwick by assault, and detached the earl of Warrenne with twelve thousand men to besiege Dunbar.

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house of peers therefore, with reason, expected that their assent should be expressly granted to all public ordinances.

With the most frequent partition of property, the knights and lesser barons gradually sunk to a rank very inferior to the great nobility, while the growth of commerce augmented the private wealth of the burgesses; it seemed therefore no longer unsuitable to unite them together in the same house, and to confound their privileges; this event took place about fifty years from the time when burgesses were first summoned to parliament. Thus the third estate of the commons reached its present form; it rose by degrees to importance; and in its progress made arts and commerce, the necessary attendants of liberty and equal rights, flourish in the kingdom.

The Scots, who attempted to stop the march of Warrenne, were defeated with the loss of twenty-thousand men. Dunbar surrendered, and, after a feeble resistance, the castles of Edinburgh and Stirling opened their gates to the English. The spirit of the nation was broken by their misfortunes; and, feeble and timid, Baliol hastened to make his submission, and solemnly resigned his crown into the hands of Edward. The victor marched to Aberdeen and Elgin without opposition; and with his usual barbarous policy, he gave orders to destroy the records which might preserve the memory of the independence of the kingdom. He left earl Warrenne governor of Scotland; and carried with him to London, Baliol, who lay two years in the Tower, and then submitted to a voluntary banishment to France, where he died in a private station.

Edward was not equally successful in his continental expeditions. In Flanders, indeed, he had been able to check the victorious career of Philip, who had made himself master of Lisle, St. Omer, Courtray, and Ypres, yet he found how vain were the hopes he had entertained of penetrating into the heart of France. Both monarchs were inclined to peace; and this disposition engaged them to submit their differences to the arbitration of pope Boniface *.

A. D. 1298. This was the last of the sovereign pontiffs that exercised an authority over the temporal jurisdiction of princes; and

* Boniface had issued a bull to prohibit the clergy from paying taxes without his consent. Edward, in return for this unwarrantable stretch of power, immediately put the ecclesiastical order out of the protection of the law; and by these means soon brought them to acquiescence.

these

these exorbitant pretensions, which he had been tempted to assume from the successful example of his predecessors, but of which the season was now passed, involved him in so many calamities, and were attended with so unfortunate a catastrophe, that they have been secretly abandoned, though never openly relinquished, by his successors in the apostolic chair. Edward and Philip, equally jealous of papal claims, took care to insert in their reference, that Boniface was made judge of their differences by their consent, as a private person, not by any right of his pontificate; and the pope, without seeming to be offended at this mortifying clause, proceeded to give a sentence between them, in which they both acquiesced. He brought them to agree that their union should be cemented by a double marriage; that of Edward himself, who was now a widower, with Margaret, Philip's sister; and that of the prince of Wales with Isabella, daughter of that monarch. Philip was willing to restore Guienne to the English; but he insisted that the Scots, and their king John Baliol, should, as his allies, be comprehended in the treaty, and restored to their liberty. The difference, after several disputes, was compromised, by their making mutual sacrifices to each other. Edward agreed to abandon his ally the earl of Flanders, on condition that Philip should treat in like manner his ally the king of Scots. The prospect of conquering these two countries, whose situation made them so commodious an acquisition to the respective kingdoms, prevailed over all other considerations; and though they were both finally disappointed in their hopes,

their

their conduct was very reconcileable to the principles of an interested policy.

Ill health obliged the earl of Warrenne to resign the administration of Scotland, into the hands of Ormesby the justiciary, and Cressingham the treasurer. The former distinguished himself by his severity; the latter had no other object than the amassing of money, by rapine and injustice. They treated the Scots as a conquered people; and in consequence, the bravest and most generous spirits of the nation were exasperated to the highest degree against the English government.

Among these was William Wallace, a man descended from an ancient family, whose courage prompted him to undertake, and enabled him finally to accomplish the delivery of his native country. Finding himself obnoxious to the administration, he had fled into the woods, and offered himself as a leader to those whom their crimes or bad fortune had reduced to a like necessity. Endowed with gigantic force of body, with daring valour, and patience to bear hunger, fatigue, and all the severities of the seasons, he began with small attempts, and discovered equal enterprise in annoying the enemy, and prudence in securing his own followers. All who thirsted after military fame, or felt the flame of patriotism, were desirous to partake his renown; and his actions seemed to vindicate the nation from the ignominy into which it had fallen by its former tame submission.

The justiciary, and the other officers of Edward, alarmed at his progress, hastily fled into England; while the Scots betook themselves to

arms

arms in every quarter. Warrenne, alarmed at this intelligence, shook off his indisposition, and collecting in the north of England an army of forty thousand men, advanced to Stirling, and found Wallace encamped on the opposite banks of the Forth. In his impatience, Warrenne ordered his army to cross a bridge which lay over the Forth; but when numbers of the English had passed, before they could be formed, they were attacked by Wallace, and pushed into the stream, or perished by the sword. Warrenne retired again into England; and Wallace, after receiving from his followers the title of guardian, or regent, passed the Tweed, and ravaged the bishopric of Durham.

This reverse hastened the return of Edward from Flanders; and impatient to recover his superiority in Scotland, he assembled the whole military force of England, Wales, and Ireland, and marched with an army of near an hundred thousand men to the northern frontiers.

The Scots were distracted by faction and animosities. The elevation of Wallace was the object of envy to the nobility; and that hero, sensible of their jealousy, and dreading the ruin of his country from those intestine discords, voluntarily resigned his authority, and retained only the command over that body of followers, who, being accustomed to victory under his standard, refused to follow into the field any other leader. The chief power now devolved on the steward of Scotland, and Cummin of Badenoch, men of eminent birth, who, fixing their station at Falkirk, purposed there to abide the assault of the English.

Edward, pleased to be able, by one decisive stroke,

stroke, to determine the fortune of the war, led his army in three bodies to the attack; and by the dexterity of his archers, and the weight of his cavalry, the Scots were broken and driven off the field with prodigious slaughter. In the general rout, however, Wallace had kept his troops entire; and having crossed the Carron, he marched leisurely along the banks of that stream. Young Robert Bruce, grandson and heir of him who had been competitor for the throne, who, in the service of England, had already given many proofs of his aspiring genius, appeared on the opposite bank; and distinguishing the Scottish chief, addressed him by name, and desired a short conference. He represented to him the fruitless and ruinous enterprise in which he was engaged, and the unequal contest between a weak state, deprived of its head, and a mighty nation conducted by the ablest monarch of the age. If the love of his country was his motive for perseverance, his obstinacy tended only to prolong her misery; if he carried his views to private grandeur, he ought to reflect, that so many haughty nobles would never submit to his rule. To this Wallace replied, that if he had hitherto acted alone as the champion of his country, it was because no leader had yet appeared to place himself in that honourable station; that the blame lay entirely with the nobility, and chiefly with Bruce himself, who had deserted the posts which his merit and fortune invited him to assume; that the Scots, possessed of such a leader, might hope successfully to oppose all the powers and abilities of Edward; and as for himself, he was desirous that his own life, as well as the existence of the nation, might terminate

terminate when they could be no otherwise preserved, than by receiving the chains of a haughty victor. The gallantry of these sentiments roused the dormant ambition of Bruce; and he secretly resolved to seize the first opportunity of embracing the cause of his oppressed country.

The defeat of Falkirk had not completed the subjection of the Scots. Under John Cummin, who had been chosen regent, they surprised the English army, routed them after an obstinate combat; extended their successes to the banks of the Tweed; and rendered it necessary for Edward to begin anew the conquest of the kingdom. A. D. 1299.

That prince prepared himself for the enterprise with his usual vigour and abilities; he penetrated with a great army from one extremity of Scotland to the other, and compelled even Cummin himself to submit to his authority. To make his acquisition more durable, he abrogated all the Scottish laws and customs, endeavoured to substitute those of England in their place, and entirely razed or destroyed the monuments of antiquity, and the vestiges of independence.

Wallace himself was at last betrayed into the hands of the king, by his friend sir John Monteith, and Edward, instead of respecting his bravery and magnanimity, resolved to overawe the Scots by an example of severity. He ordered the hero to be carried in chains to London; to be tried as a rebel and a traitor, though he had never sworn fealty to England; and to be executed on Tower-hill. Such was the unworthy fate of Wallace, who, through the course of several years, with signal A. D. 1305.

conduct,

conduct, intrepidity, and perseverance, defended, against a public and oppressive enemy, the liberties of his native country.

A. D. 1306. The barbarous policy of Edward failed of the purpose to which it was directed; the Scots were enraged at the injustice and cruelty exercised on their champion; and it was not long ere a more fortunate leader presented himself to conduct them to vengeance. The conference which Robert Bruce had held with Wallace on the banks of the Carron had sunk deep in his mind; and he determined to revive the pretensions of his family, and aspire to the vacant throne. Edward was not ignorant of the spirit and the pretensions of this young chief; and he ordered his motions to be watched. One of the friends of Bruce, anticipating danger, yet not daring, amidst so many jealous eyes, to hold any conversation with him, sent him, by his servants, a pair of spurs, and a purse of gold, which he pretended to have borrowed from him; and left it to his sagacity to discover his meaning. Bruce rightly interpreting the allusion, set off immediately, and travelling through crossroads, reached Dumfries in Annandale, the chief seat of his family interest, where he found a number of the Scottish nobility assembled, and among the rest, John Cummin, with whom he had formerly lived on terms of strict intimacy.

The noblemen were astonished at the appearance of Bruce among them; and still more when he discovered to them the object of his journey, which was to live or die with them, in the defence of the liberties of his country. These generous sentiments, assisted by the graces of his youth

youth and manly deportment, impressed the minds of his audience, and roused them to freedom and revenge. Cummin alone, who had secretly taken his measures with the king, set before them the certain destruction they must expect, if they again shook off their allegiance to the victorious Edward. Bruce, apprised of his treachery, and foreseeing the certain failure of all his schemes from the opposition of so powerful a leader, immediately took his resolution. He followed Cummin, on the dissolution of the assembly; and as he passed through the cloisters of the Gray-friars, he ran him through the body.

The death of Cummin sealed the conspiracy of the Scottish nobles. The genius of the nation roused itself. Bruce was solemnly crowned at Scone; and attacking with fury the English, dispersed in their quarters, he again expelled them the kingdom. Edward found that the Scots, twice conquered in his reign, must yet be afresh subdued.

To effectuate this, he assembled a great army, and was preparing to enter the frontiers, when in the thirty-fifth year of his reign, and the sixty-ninth of his age, he unexpectedly sickened, and died at Burgh on the Sands, whence he was removed for interment to Westminster Abbey.* With his last breath, he enjoined his son and successor, to prosecute the enterprise, and never to desist till he had finally subdued the kingdom of Scotland. A. D. 1307.

* The tomb of Edward I. was opened in 1774, when his body was found unconsumed. Several monuments of his affection for his queen Eleanor, who died, 1296, at Horneby in Lincolnshire, still remain in the places where her corpse rested.

Edward

Edward II. inherited not with the throne the vigour of his father. He was now in the twenty-third year of his age, of an agreeable figure, and of a mild and gentle disposition; but the first act of his reign blasted the hopes which the English had entertained of him. Equally incapable of, and averse to business, he only entered Scotland to retreat: he disbanded his army, without making any impression on Bruce; and by this feeble step, convinced his nobles, they might with impunity bid defiance to his power, which they did not long want an opportunity to attempt.

Piers Gaveston, the son of a Gascon knight, by his insinuating address, his elegance of form, and his lively wit, had acquired an entire ascendant over the young Edward. The late king, apprehensive of the consequences, had banished him the kingdom; but the present no sooner ascended the throne than he recalled him, created him earl of Cornwal, married him to his own niece, and seemed to enjoy no pleasure in his royal dignity, but as it enabled him to exalt this object of his fond affections.

The haughty barons were offended at the superiority of a minion, whom they despised, but whose pomp and splendour eclipsed their own. In a journey which the king took to France to espouse the princess Isabella, he left Gaveston guardian of the realm; but, on the king's return, Isabella, who was of an imperious and intriguing disposition, finding her husband's capacity required to be governed, thought herself best entitled to perform the office, and was well pleased to see a combination of the nobility formed against the favourite.

At the head of that faction, was Thomas earl of Lancaster, cousin-german to the king. This nobleman entering the parliament with his adherents in arms, required the banishment of Gaveston; to which Edward was obliged to submit; but instead of sending him back to Gascony, he appointed him lord lieutenant of Ireland. A. D. 1308.

Edward, however, unhappy in the absence of his minion, having contrived to soften some of the chiefs of the barons, ventured to recal Gaveston; but the majority were not swayed by the example of their leaders. In defiance of the laws and the king's prohibition, with a numerous retinue of armed followers, they forced Edward to devolve for one year, the whole authority of the realm on a chosen junto of twelve; and this committee, thus sanctioned, among other regulations, banished Gaveston for ever from the king's dominions.

No sooner, however, did Edward, by retiring to York, find himself out of the terror of the barons' power, than he recalled Gaveston; when the barons, provoked at this measure, flew to arms, with the earl of Lancaster at their head. The king escaped; but the castle of Scarborough, where he had left his favourite, was obliged to surrender to the earl of Pembroke. From thence he was removed to the castle of Dedington in Oxfordshire, where being left with a small guard, he was surprised by the earl of Warwick; and the head of the unhappy Gaveston, without any regard to the laws, was struck off by the hands of the executioner. On the first intelligence of the death of his favourite, Edward was violent in his menaces of vengeance; A. D. 1313.

geance; but from a natural facility of disposition, he hearkened to an accommodation, and subscribed a general amnesty of all that had passed.

The affairs of Scotland indeed withdrew his attention from inferior objects. The progress of Bruce had been rapid; and he closely pressed the castle of Stirling, the only fortress in that kingdom which held out for the English; to relieve which, Edward summoned his forces from all quarters, to the number of an hundred thousand men. At Bannockburn, about two miles from Stirling, Bruce with thirty thousand hardy warriors, inflamed with the love of independence, awaited the charge of the enemy. A hill covered his right flank, a morass his left; and to screen his front he had dug deep pits, planted them with stakes, and covered them over with turf. The English, confident in their superior numbers, rushed forward without precaution. Their cavalry was entangled in the pits, their ranks were broken, and the Scottish horse pouring through the openings, scattered on every side slaughter and dismay. Before they could recover from their panic, an army appeared to be marching towards them on their left; composed of waggoners, and sumpter-boys whom Robert had supplied with military standards. The stratagem took effect: the English threw down their arms and fled; and were pursued to the gates of Berwick. Besides an inestimable booty, the Scots took many persons of quality prisoners, and above four hundred gentlemen, whose ransom was a new accession of wealth to the victors.

This

This decisive battle fixed the throne of Bruce, and shook that of Edward. The defeat of the latter rendered him contemptible in the eyes of his subjects. Unable to exist without a favourite, he had chosen Hugh Spenser, a young man of high rank, and noble family, in the room of Gaveston. Spenser possessed all the exterior accomplishments of person and address, but was neither endowed with prudence nor moderation. His father, who was of the same name, was a nobleman venerable from his years, and qualified by his wisdom and his valour, to have supplied the defects both of the king and his minion: but Edward's attachment rendered the name of Spenser odious; and the turbulent Lancaster and his adherents were impatient to achieve his destruction. A. D. 1315.

The claim of Spenser to an estate which had been settled on the illustrious family of Mowbray, was the signal for civil war. Lancaster and several of the most potent barons flew to arms; they ravaged the lands of both the Spensers, who were then absent on the continent; and having extorted from the king an act of attainder against his favourite, and of indemnity for themselves, they disbanded their army, and separated in security, as they imagined, to their several castles. Edward, however, having assembled an army, dropped the mask, reversed the sentence, and recalled the Spensers; and prepared to chastise his enemies.

Meanwhile, Lancaster, having hastily collected thirty thousand men, fled with his troops towards the north; but being intercepted at Boroughbridge, after a short action, was made

 prisoner.

prisoner. Edward, though gentle by nature, remembered on this occasion the fate of Gaveston; and Lancaster, after being exposed to the derision of the populace, was conducted to an eminence near Pomfret, one of his own castles, where he suffered decapitation.

Edward, after another fruitless attempt on Scotland, had concluded a truce for thirteen years with Bruce, and thus virtually acknowledged his title. He was, however, still embarrassed by the demands of his brother-in-law, Charles the Fair, who required him to appear and do homage for the fees that he held in France. The queen had been permitted to make a journey to that country, in order to soften her brother; but Charles remained inflexible; and Spenser, who had been engaged in many quarrels with Isabella, declined attending his master to Paris, where her credit might expose him to danger. An expedient was therefore proposed and adopted, that Edward should resign Guienne to his son, now thirteen years of age, and that the prince should render personal homage to Charles, as his superior lord.

Young Edward was accordingly sent to Paris, where the queen was already surrounded by a number of English fugitives, the remains of the Lancastrian faction. Among these was young Roger Mortimer, a potent baron in the Welsh marches, who by the graces of his person and address, quickly advanced in the affections of Isabella; and at last triumphed over her honour. Edward, probably suspecting what had taken place, required her speedily to return with the prince; but instead of obeying his orders, she publicly declared that she would never

set

set foot in England, till Spenser was removed from his presence and councils.

This resolution gave fresh spirits to the malcontents in England; and Isabella, having extended her alliances abroad, by affiancing prince Edward with Philippa daughter of the count of Holland and Hainault, enlisted three thousand men, sailed from the harbour of Dort, and landed, without opposition, on the coast of Suffolk. Several of the most powerful barons immediately joined her; and to render her cause popular, she renewed her declaration that her sole purpose was to free the king and kingdom, from the tyranny of the Spensers. A. D. 1326.

The unhappy king, after trying in vain to rouse the citizens of London, hastened to the West, and was hotly pursued to Bristol by his own brother, the earl of Kent, and the foreign forces under John de Hainault. Disappointed in the loyalty of those parts, he passed over to Wales, leaving the elder Spenser governor of the castle of Bristol; but the garrison having mutinied against him, he was delivered into the hands of his enemies. This venerable noble, who had nearly reached his ninetieth year, was without trial condemned to death. He was hanged on a gibbet, his body cut to pieces and thrown to the dogs, and his head exposed on a pole to the insults of the unfeeling populace. Edward himself attempting to escape to Ireland, was driven back by contrary winds; and being discovered, was committed to the custody of the earl of Leicester, in the castle of Kenilworth. The younger Spenser his favourite, who also fell into the hands of his enemies, was executed like

like his father, without any appearance of a legal trial, or any real crime being alleged against him, except the weak and frivolous one, that he was a favourite of the king.

A. D. 1327. The diabolical Isabella, in order to avail herself of the prevailing delusion, summoned in the king's name a parliament at Westminster. A charge was drawn up against Edward, in which, even though framed by his inveterate enemies, nothing but his want of capacity or his misfortunes, could be objected against him. His deposition, however, was voted by parliament; and the prince his son was placed on the throne.

Hitherto, the queen had been successful in her aims; but the gross violation of every duty and every tie, soon estranged from her the minds of men: the proofs which daily broke out of her criminal commerce with Mortimer, increased the general abhorrence against her; and her hypocrisy, in publicly bewailing with tears the king's unhappy fate, was not able to deceive even the most stupid and most prejudiced of her adherents. In proportion as the queen became the object of public hatred, the dethroned monarch, who had been the victim of her crimes and her ambition, was regarded with pity, with friendship, with veneration; and men became sensible, that all his misconduct, which faction had so much exaggerated, had been owing to the natural imbecility, not to any voluntary depravity, of his character. The earl of Leicester, now earl of Lancaster, to whose custody he had been committed, was soon touched with those generous sentiments; and besides using his prisoner with gentleness and humanity, he

he was suspected to have entertained still more honourable intentions in his favour. The king, therefore, was taken from his hands, and delivered over to lord Berkeley, Mautravers, and Gournay, who were entrusted alternately, each for a month, with the charge of guarding him. While he was in the custody of Berkeley, at his castle in Gloucestershire, he was still treated with the gentleness due to his rank and his misfortunes; but when the turn of Mautravers and Gournay came, every species of indignity was practised against him, as if their intentions had been to break entirely the prince's spirit, and to employ his sorrows and afflictions, instead of more violent and more dangerous expedients, for the instruments of his murder. But as this method of accomplishing his object, appeared still too slow to the impatient Mortimer, he secretly sent orders to the two keepers, who were at his devotion, instantly to dispatch him. Taking advantage of Berkeley's sickness, in whose custody he then was, and who was thereby incapacitated from attending his charge, they came to Berkeley-castle, put themselves in possession of the king's person; and thrusting a red hot iron through a horn into his fundament, that no marks of external violence might be seen, they put him to the most horrible death. The dreadful deed, however, was discovered to all the guards and attendants by the screams with which the agonizing king filled the castle, while his bowels were consuming.

A. D. 1327.

The perpetrators of this shocking and almost unheard of crime, in the ensuing revolution found it necessary to fly from the resentment of

their

their country. Gournay was afterwards seized at Marseilles and beheaded; and though Mautravers eventually obtained his pardon, it was not until he had languished many years in Germany in continual terror and concealment, racked with the pangs of conscious guilt.

In all his connections. Edward was unfortunate, yet a more innocent and inoffensive character can scarcely be named. To his mildness indeed and his want of penetration, in choosing men capable of guiding the reins of government, which he was incapable of holding himself, his misfortunes are principally to be ascribed.

CHAP. VI.

The Reign of Edward III.

A PARLIAMENT being assembled, an act of indemnity was passed in favour of those who had deposed the late king, and the attainder against Lancaster and his party being reversed, he was appointed guardian to the young king Edward III. with a council of regency, consisting of five prelates and seven lay lords.

Robert Bruce, king of Scotland, though declining in health and years, thought the present opportunity favourable for invading England, and accordingly directed an army of twenty-five thousand men, under the command of the earl of Murray and lord Douglas, to penetrate into Durham. Impatient of military glory, young Edward advanced to repel them at the head of sixty thousand English, and the foreign forces of John of Hainault. The Scots, light and unincumbered, long eluded his pursuits; but he found

found them at length encamped on the southern banks of the Were, and though their situation was advantageous, he would have hazarded an attack. His ardour, however, was restrained either by the prudence or envy of Mortimer; who without being included in the regency, possessed a paramount authority; and the Scots availing themselves of the delay, retired within their own territories; while Edward returned to London highly incensed against Mortimer for the disappointment and disgrace he had incurred.

The power of Mortimer, indeed, was not only formidable, but disgusting to every one. Edward, who had attained his eighteenth year, repined at the fetters in which he was held by this insolent minister; and with some friends, concerted a plan to emancipate himself. The queen-dowager and Mortimer lodged in the castle of Nottingham; the king also was admitted, though with a few only of his attendants; and as the castle was strictly guarded, it became necessary to communicate the design to sir William Eland the governor, who zealously took part in it. By his direction the king's associates were admitted through a subterraneous passage; and Mortimer, without having it in his power to make resistance, was suddenly seized in an apartment adjoining to the queen's. A parliament was immediately summoned for his condemnation; and such was the notoriety of his infamy, that without trial, or examining a witness, he was sentenced to be hanged on a gibbet at the Elmes, in the neighbourhood of London. The queen, still more guilty than Mortimer, was preserved by the duty of her son: she was, however, confined to her own house; and though the king,

king, during the remainder of her life, paid her occasional visits, she never regained any credit or influence.

A. D. 1332. Edward having now assumed the reins of government, applied himself to correct the disorders that had grown up during the late lawless administration; and the severity with which he caused justice to be executed, soon restored the kingdom to internal tranquillity, which allowed him to extend his views. Robert Bruce was no more; and his son David, a minor, found a competitor in Edward Baliol, the son of John, who had been crowned king of Scotland. The pretensions of the latter were secretly supported by Edward, who connived at a number of the English barons, arming their vassals in his cause. With these allies Baliol landed on the coast of Fife, and on the banks of the river Erne, surprised and defeated the Scots: twelve thousand of the latter fell in the action, and among these the earl of Marre, the regent. The victor immediately marched to Scone, and was crowned there with great pomp, while his competitor David sought shelter in France. Not long after, however, Baliol experienced a sudden and total reverse of fortune; he was attacked by sir Archibald Douglas, and the leaders of the opposite party; and after an ineffectual struggle, fled into England.

During his short lived royalty, he had offered Edward, to do homage to him for his crown: and that monarch determinnd to seize the favourable opportunity of recoveriug the ascendancy which under Robert Bruce had been lost. As the ally of Baliol he invested Berwick: forty thousand Scots, conducted by the regent Douglas,

glas, advanced to the relief of that important fortress; who relying on their superior numbers, ventured to attack the English at Halidown-hill. Their temerity was chastised by a total defeat, with very little loss on the side of England.

After this fatal blow, the Scottish nobles had no other resource left but submission: Baliol was acknowledged king, by a parliament assembled at Edinburgh; the superiority of England was again recognised, and the gratitude of Baliol ceded Berwick, Dunbar, and all the south-east counties, to be for ever annexed to the English monarchy.

This mean and temporizing concession, raised against him such a storm of indignation and revolt, that Edward found it necessary to prop, in person, the tottering throne of his ally. Twice he entered Scotland in arms, and marched without resistance through the low countries, ravaging the estates of those who were disaffected to his party. The Scots, however, taught by experience, retired into their hills and fastnesses, and waited a favourable moment for revenge, from the war which was on the point of breaking out between France and England. A. D. 1334.

It had long been a prevailing opinion that the crown of France could never descend to a female, and this maxim was supposed to be confirmed by a clause in the Salic code; but the king of England early embraced a notion that he was entitled, in right of his mother, to the succession of the kingdom, and that the claim of the nephew was preferable to that of Philip de Valois, the cousin-german, who had been placed on the throne of France, with the unanimous consent of his people. A. D. 1337.

But

But though the youthful and ambitious mind of Edward had rashly taken up this delusive idea, he did not think proper to insist on his pretensions, which must have immediately involved him, on very unequal terms, in a dangerous and implacable war with so powerful a monarch. Philip was a prince of mature years, of great experience, and, at that time, of an established character, both for prudence and valour; and by these circumstances, as well as by the internal union of his people, and their acquiescence in his undoubted right, he possessed every advantage above a raw youth, newly raised, to the government of the most intractable and most turbulent subjects in Europe. An incident, however, immediately occurred, which required that Edward should either openly declare his pretensions, or for ever renounce and abjure them. He was summoned to do homage for Guienne: Philip was preparing to compel him by force of arms; and Edward finding it prudent to submit to present necessity, went over to Amiens; and in a formal deed, acknowledged that he owed liege homage to France; which was in effect ratifying, and that in the strongest terms, Philip's title to the crown of that kingdom. His own claim indeed was so unreasonable, and so thoroughly disavowed by the whole French nation, that it is probable he would have desisted from renewing it, had not some subsequent jealousies and misunderstanding taken place, which Edward eagerly laid hold of to promote his views, fallacious and destructive as they proved.

Determined to engage in this chimerical attempt, the king began with opening his intentions

tions to the count of Hainault his father-in-law; and having engaged him in his interests, he employed the good offices and counsels of that prince in drawing into his alliance the other sovereigns of that neighbourhod. The duke of Brabant was induced, by his mediation, and by large remittances of money from England, to promise his concurrence: the archbishop of Cologne, the duke of Gueldres, the marquis of Juliers, the count of Namur, the lords of Fauquemont and Baquen, were engaged by like motives, to embrace the English alliance. These sovereign princes could supply, either from their own states, or from the bordering countries, great numbers of warlike troops; and nothing was wanting to make the force on that quarter very formidable, but the accession of Flanders; which Edward procured by means somewhat extraordinary and unusual.

The Flemings having attained to a superior state of opulence and refinement, could not longer brook the vassalage of the feudal institutions. They had risen in tumults; had insulted the nobles; had chased their earl into France; and delivering themselves over to the guidance of a seditious leader, had been guilty of all that insolence and disorder, to which the thoughtless and enraged populace are so much inclined, wherever they are unfortunate enough to become their own masters.

Their present leader was James d'Arteville, a brewer in Ghent, who governed them with a more absolute sway than had ever been assumed by any of their lawful sovereigns; and this seditious tradesman, the haughty Edward courted with the most submissive assiduity. D'Arteville, sensible

sensible that the Flemings were naturally inclined to the English, and proud of these advances from the king, invited him over to the Low Countries. Edward, after having received the consent of his parliament, passed over to Flanders, accompanied by a body of troops. Two obstacles yet prevented him from entering on action; the vassals of the empire would not act without the direction of the emperor, who still maintained the exterior of peace with France; and the Flemings pretended the same scruples with regard to the invasion of their liege lord. The first was overcome by the emperor appointing Edward vicar of the empire; an empty honour, but which served to banish the doubts of the German princes; and to obviate the second, Edward, by the advice of d'Arteville, assumed the title of king of France. Yet he ventured not on this step without hesitation and reluctance; and his mind seemed filled with a presage of the calamities which he was about to inflict and entail on both countries.

A. D. 1339. After a vain attempt on Cambray, Edward advanced to the frontiers of France. He there saw the vanity of his expectations; the count of Namur, and even the count of Hainault, his brother-in-law, instead of being deceived by the new title he had assumed, refused to commence hostilities against their liege lord, and retired with their troops. The king, however, passed the Scheldt, and encamped near Capelle with fifty thousand men; Philip approached him with an army nearly double in number: the English monarch was averse to engage against so great a superiority; the French king thought it sufficient if he eluded the attacks

of

of his adversary; the latter soon reaped the harvest of his caution, since the exhausted finances of Edward compelled him to disband his army, and quit the field.

The spirit of Edward, however, was still unbroken. By confirming the ancient charters, and the privileges of boroughs, he obtained from the parliament a considerable supply, and with a fleet of 250 sail, he again embarked for the continent. Near Sluise he was opposed by the French fleet, consisting of 400 ships. The inferiority of the English in number, was compensated by their nautical skill, and the presence of their monarch; the encounter was fierce and bloody; but in the heat of action, the Flemings, near whose coast the French had imprudently engaged, issued from their harbours, and oppressed their weary adversaries with unexpected fury; two hundred and thirty of the French ships were taken, and thirty thousand of their best seamen perished. So fatal was the loss, that the courtiers of Philip preserved a gloomy silence; and their sovereign was at length informed of the national calamity by the privileged tongue of a court fool, or jester.

Numbers now crowded to the standard of Edward; and with an army of above an hundred thousand men, he invested Tournay. That city had been provided with a numerous garrison; but a siege of ten weeks had nearly exhausted their provisions, when their courage was confirmed by the march of the French king, at the head of a mighty host, to their relief. The latter still declined to hazard his crown in a decisive action; and contented himself with throwing succours into Tournay. Both armies

continued in sight of each other without engaging; and their critical situation induced Jane, countess dowager of Hainault, to interpose her good offices, in order to prevent the effusion of blood. This princess was mother-in-law to Edward, and sister to Philip; and her pious efforts prevailed on them both, though they could not lay aside, at least to suspend their animosities, by subscribing a truce for a twelvemonth.

Edward returned to England deeply chagrined at his disappointment; and vented his ill humour on his own officers. In particular, he was determined to make Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury, whom he had entrusted to collect the taxes, and whom he accused of having been remiss in his duty, feel the weight of his displeasure. But that prelate issuing a general sentence of excommunication against his enemies, the king was glad to be reconciled to him, and to allow him to resume his functions.

In order to obtain a new supply from the parliament, Edward had been reduced to subscribe to nearly the same restrictions as had been imposed on Henry III. and Edward II; yet no sooner was the money collected, than he revoked and annulled his concessions; but, though by this most unworthy and fraudulent measure he recovered his authority at home, the many mortifications he had experienced in his war with France would probably have influenced him to drop his claim, had not a revolution in Britanny opened to him more promising views.

John III. duke of Britanny having no issue, was solicitous to prevent those disorders to which, on the event of his demise, a disputed succession might expose his subjects. His younger brother, the

the count of Penthievre, had left only one daughter, whom the duke deemed his heir; and as his family had inherited the dutchy by a female succession, he thought her title preferable to that of the count of Mountfort, who, being brother by a second marriage, was the male heir of that principality. He accordingly purposed to bestow his niece in marriage on some person who might be able to defend her rights; and he cast his eye on Charles of Blois, nephew of the king of France. Yet, as he both loved his subjects, and was beloved by them, he determined not to take this important step without their approbation; which being readily obtained, the marriage was concluded; and all his vassals, and among the rest the count of Mountfort, swore fealty to Charles and to his consort, as to their future sovereigns.

But on the death of the aged duke, the ambition of the count of Mountfort broke through all these regulations, and kindled a war, not only dangerous to Britanny, but to a great part of Europe. Sensible that he could expect no favour from Philip, he made a voyage to England on pretence of soliciting his claim to the earldom of Richmond, which had devolved to him by his brother's death; and there, offering to do homage to Edward as king of France, for the dutchy of Britanny, he proposed a strict alliance for the support of their mutual pretensions. Edward immediately perceived the advantages attending this treaty; and it required a very short negotiation to conclude an alliance between two men who, though their pleas with regard to the preference of male or female succession were directly opposite, were intimately connected by their immediate interests.

Soon

A. D. 1342. Soon after this, however, Mountfort fell into the hands of his enemies; was conducted as a prisoner to Paris; and shut up in the tower of the Louvre. But notwithstanding this misfortune, his party was still animated by the manly spirit of his consort, who, instead of deploring with female weakness the captivity of her husband, roused the states of Britanny to resist an usurper imposed upon them by the arms of France; invested in Hennebonne, she sustained with undaunted courage the assaults of Charles of Blois; and just as the strength of that city seemed exhausted, and a capitulation had been proposed, the exulting countess beheld from a lofty tower the long expected fleet of England steering to her relief. Six thousand archers, with a body of heavy cavalry, were immediately landed, under the command of sir Walter Manny, a brave and experienced leader: and Charles of Blois was compelled to abandon a siege that was become hopeless.

A more ample reinforcement followed under the guidance of Robert of Artois; and Vannes was successfully attacked. The Bretons who adhered to Charles, assembled to recover this important city; and Robert was compelled to relinquish his prey, after receiving a wound which proved mortal. To succour his ally, Edward, with twelve thousand men, landed at Morbien near Vannes, and commenced the three important sieges of Vannes, of Rennes, and of Nantz; but, by undertaking too much, he failed of success in all his enterprises. The duke of Normandy, eldest son of Philip, appeared in Britanny at the head of an army of thirty thousand infantry, and four thousand cavalry.

Edward

Edward was obliged to concentrate his forces, and to entrench himself before Vannes, where the duke of Normandy soon after arrived, and in a manner invested the besiegers. The English camp began to be afflicted by famine; and in this dangerous situation, Edward willingly accepted the mediation of two legates from the court of Rome: he subscribed a truce for three years, by which all prisoners were to be released, the places in Britanny to remain with the present possessors, and Vannes was to be sequestered into the hands of the legates, to be afterwards disposed of according to their pleasure.

It was not long, however, before Edward found a pretence for new hostilities. He complained that some nobles, the partisans of the house of Mountfort, had been punished contrary to the articles of the treaty: the parliament seemed to participate in his resentments; and granted him liberal supplies for the renewal of the war. The earl of Derby, with an English army, passed over to Guienne, defeated at Bergerac the French general the count de Lisle, reduced great part of Perigord, until his progress was checked by the duke of Normandy, at the head of one hundred thousand men, who would probably soon have wrested from the English, all their conquests, had he not been summoned from improving his advantages, to another quarter of the kingdom. A. D. 1344.

To succour the earl of Derby, Edward had collected at Southampton a fleet of nearly a thousand sail, and an army of thirty thousand men. He embarked on this destination, with his son the prince of Wales, and the flower of his nobility; but the winds proving A. D. 1346.

proving contrary, he was prevailed on to change the object of his attack, and to invade Normandy. Destitute of any military forces, its fertile fields and opulent towns presented a rich prey to the invader, while its vicinity to the capital of France rendered every event, in those quarters, of importance. Influenced by these considerations, Edward ordering his fleet to steer for the Norman coast, safely landed his forces at la Hogue; and immediately spread his army over the whole country; defeated a body of troops which had been collected for the defence of Caen, and carried by assault, and plundered that rich city. He moved next towards Rouen; but he found the bridge over the Seine broken down, and the king of France, who had recovered from his surprise, encamped on the opposite bank with an host of one hundred thousand men.

Edward perceiving that the French intended to enclose him in their country, by a secret and rapid march, gained Poissy, passed the Seine, and pressed forward towards Flanders; but the same obstacles presented themselves on the Somme: the bridges were either broken down or strongly protected; and a numerous detachment guarded the northern banks. The promise of liberal reward induced a peasant to betray the interests of his country, and to inform Edward of a ford below Abbeville. At the head of his troops the king threw himself into the river, drove the enemy from their station, and pursued them over the plain. As his rear guard passed, Philip himself arrived; and Edward sensible that a battle was unavoidable, prepared for it with coolness and judgment. He chose his

his ground with advantage near the village of Crecy;* drew up his army on a gentle ascent, and divided them into three lines: the first was commanded by the prince of Wales, and under him, by the earls of Warwick and Oxford; the earls of Arundel and Northampton were at the head of the second line; and he remained with the third division himself. His flanks were secured by trenches, and according to some historians, several pieces of cannon were placed in his front.

While the English, inspired by the skill and countenance of their sovereign, awaited with steady composure the charge of the French, the latter, burning with resentment, and only afraid lest their prey should escape them, pressed forwards without order or obedience; and they arrived in presence of the English, imperfectly formed, and fatigued by their imprudent haste. The first line, consisting of fifteen thousand Genoese cross-bow men, was commanded by Anthony Doria, and Charles Grimaldi; the second was led by the count of Alençon, brother to the king; Philip himself was at the head of the third, accompanied by the kings of Bohemia, of the Romans, and of Majorca, with all the nobility and great vassals of the crown of France.

The conflict was long and bloody, but the intrepid courage of Edward prince of Wales, who though a stripling, performed prodigies of valour, decided the fortune of the day. The battle became, for some time, hot and dangerous;

* The battle of Crecy began at three o'clock in the afternoon, and lasted till dark.

and

and the earl of Warwick, apprehensive of the event from the superior numbers of the French, dispatched a messenger to the king, and entreated him to send succours to the relief of the prince. Edward had chosen his station on the top of the hill; and surveyed in tranquillity the scene of action. When the messenger accosted him, his first question was, whether the prince were slain or wounded? On receiving an answer in the negative, "Return," said he, "to my son, and tell him that I reserve the honour of the day to him: I am confident that he will shew himself worthy of the honour of knighthood which I so lately conferred upon him: he will be able, without my assistance, to repel the enemy." This speech being reported to the prince and his attendants, inspired them with fresh courage: they made an attack with redoubled vigour on the French, in which the count of Alençon was slain: the whole line of cavalry was thrown into disorder; the riders were killed or dismounted; the Welch infantry rushed into the throng, and with their long knives cut the throats of all who had fallen: nor was any quarter given that day by the victors.

In this bloody and decisive engagement, the king of France had himself a horse killed under him; he was remounted; and, though left almost alone, seemed still determined to maintain the combat; when John Hainault seizing the reins of his bridle, turned about his horse, and carried him off the field of battle. The whole French army now took to flight, and was followed and put to the sword, without mercy, by the enemy; till the darkness of the night put an

an end to the pursuit. The king, on their meeting, flew into the arms of the prince of Wales, and exclaimed, "My brave son! persevere in your honourable cause: you are my son; for valiantly have you acquitted yourself to-day: you have shewn yourself worthy of empire."

Next morning was foggy; and as the English observed that many of the enemy had lost their way in the night and in the mist, they employed a stratagem to bring them into their power; they erected on the eminences some French standards which they had taken in the battle; and all who were allured by this false signal were cruelly put to the sword, and no quarter given them. In excuse for this inhumanity, it was alleged that the French king had given similar orders to his troops; but the real reason probably was, that the English did not choose to be encumbered with prisoners. In this battle, there fell, by a moderate computation, twelve hundred French knights, fourteen hundred gentlemen, four thousand men at arms, besides about thirty thousand of inferior rank: many of the principal nobility of France, the dukes of Lorraine and Bourbon, the earls of Flanders, Blois, Vaudemont, Aumale, were left on the field of battle. The kings also of Bohemia and Majorca were slain. The former was blind from age; but being resolved to hazard his person, and set an example to others, he ordered the reins of his bridle to be tied on each side to the horses of two gentlemen of his train; and his dead body and those of his attendants, were afterwards found among the slain, with their horses standing by them in that situation. His crest was three ostrich feathers; and his motto,

 "*Ich*

"*Ich dien*, I serve:" which the prince of Wales and his successors adopted in memorial of this great victory. The action may seem no less remarkable for the small loss sustained by the English, than for the great slaughter of the French: there were killed in it only one esquire and three knights, and but a small number of common men.

The great prudence of Edward appeared not only in obtaining this memorable victory, but in the measures which he pursued after it. Not elated by his present prosperity, so far as to expect the total conquest of France, or even that of any considerable provinces, he limited his ambition to the conquest of Calais; and after the interval of a few days, which he employed in interring the slain, he marched with his victorious army, and presented himself before the place.

John of Vienne, a valiant knight of Burgundy, was governor of Calais, and being supplied with every thing necessary for defence, he encouraged the townsmen to perform to the utmost their duty to their king and country. Edward, therefore, sensible from the beginning that it was in vain to attempt the place by force, purposed only to reduce it by famine. This siege employed him nearly twelvemonths, and during this interval, there passed in different places many other events, which in general redounded to the honour of the English arms.

The Scottish nation, after long defending, with incredible perseverance, their liberties against the superior force of the English, recalled their king David Bruce in 1342. Though that prince, neither by his age nor capacity, could

could bring them much assistance, he gave them the countenance of sovereign authority; and as Edward's wars on the continent proved a great diversion to the force of England, they rendered the balance more equal between the kingdoms. In every truce which Edward concluded with Philip, the king of Scotland was comprehended; and when Edward made his last invasion upon France, David was strongly solicited by his ally to invade the northern counties of England. Accordingly David soon mustered a great army, entered Northumberland at the head of above fifty thousand men, and carried his ravages and devastations to the gates of Durham. But queen Philippa, assembling a body of little more than twelve thousand men, which she entrusted to the command of lord Percy, ventured to approach him at Neville's Cross near that city; and riding through the ranks of her army, exhorted every man to do his duty, and to execute revenge on these barbarous ravagers: nor could she be persuaded to leave the field, till the armies were on the point of engaging. The Scots were soon broken and chased off the field: fifteen thousand of them were slain; and the king himself was taken prisoner, with several of his most distinguished nobles.

A. D. 1347.

Philippa having secured her royal prisoner in the tower, crossed the sea to her consort, whom she found still engaged in the siege of Calais: after a vain attempt to relieve it, at the head of two hundred thousand men, Philip had been obliged to abandon that city to its fate; the inhabitants were reduced to the last extremity; but Edward would

 only

only consent to suspend the general destruction, on condition that six of the most considerable citizens should atone for the obstinacy of the rest, by submitting their lives to his disposal, and by presenting, with ropes about their necks, the keys of the city. While the wretched people gazed on each other, lost in despair, Eustace de St. Pierre, whose name deserves to be immortal, offered to encounter death for the safety of his friends and companions. The generous flame of enthusiasm was soon communicated, and five more intreated to share the glory and the danger: they appeared erect and undaunted before the haughty Edward, who at the intercession of his queen Philippa, dismissed with presents these gallant citizens.

A. D. 1347. To secure the possession of Calais, Edward ordered all the native inhabitants to quit the town, and peopled it anew with English; a policy which probably secured so long to his successors that important fortress; he soon after, through the mediation of the pope's legates, concluded a truce with France; and on his return, established the Order of the Garter. The general account of its origin is, that the king's mistress, the countess of Salisbury, having dropped her garter in a ball room, Edward taking it up, observed some of the courtiers to smile, upon which he called out, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*, Evil to him that evil thinks;" and in memorial of this event, he instituted the Order of the Garter, with these words for its motto.

A damp was thrown over this festivity by a destructive pestilence which invaded the kingdom, and is computed to have swept away near a third

a third of the inhabitants. In London alone, fifty thousand persons are said to have perished. This malady first discovered itself in the north of Asia, and made its devastating progress from one end of Europe to the other; and so grievous a calamity served, more than the pacific disposition of the contracting parties, to prolong the truce between France and England.

A. D. 1350. During this truce, Philip had paid the debt of nature, and his son John, hitherto known by the title of the duke of Normandy, ascended the throne. His piety and sincerity procured him the surname of "Good;" but he possessed not that masterly prudence which the situation of the kingdom required; and his measures were embarrassed by the intrigues of his kinsman Charles king of Navarre, to whom the epithet of "Wicked" has been with justice affixed, though he possessed talents of the very first order, had they been honourably directed. This prince did not conceal his pretensions, in right of his mother, to the crown of France; and he seduced by his address, Charles, the eldest son of John, who first bore the name of dauphin, to share his councils. But Charles repenting of his folly, revealed the secret to his father; and the king of Navarre with several of his associates were seized at an entertainment at Rouen; some of the latter were immediately led to execution; and the king himself was thrown into prison.

This decisive and strictly justifiable step was far from proving advantageous to John. Philip, the brother of the king of Navarre, flew to arms, and implored the protection of England; and as the truce was expired, Edward was at liberty to afford

afford him assistance. From ravaging Picardy, the king himself was recalled to check the incursions of the Scots; he laid waste the country from Berwick to Edinburgh; and Baliol, finding the aversion of his countrymen increase, resigned the crown into Edward's hands, on condition of receiving a moderate pension for life.

A. D. 1355. In the mean time, young Edward, accompanied by the earls of Warwick and Salisbury, had anchored in the Somme, with three hundred sail: being joined by the vassals of Gascony, he carried fire and sword throughout Languedoc: in a second campaign, at the head of twelve thousand men, he penetrated into the heart of France; when he was alarmed with the unwelcome intelligence that the French king was approaching with an army of sixty thousand men.

Near Poictiers, prince Edward prepared for battle, with equal courage and prudence; yet even the most splendid military qualities could not have extricated him, had the French availed themselves of their superior numbers, and contented themselves with intercepting his provisions. The prince was indeed so sensible of his desperate condition, that he offered to purchase a retreat by ceding all his conquests, and by stipulating not to serve against France for seven years; but John required him to surrender himself prisoner. This proposal was rejected by the high spirited Edward, who declared that England should never be obliged to pay the price of his ransom.

All hopes of accommodation being at an end, the prince of Wales strengthened by new intrenchments, the post which he had before so judiciously

diciously chosen; and contrived an ambush of three hundred men at arms, and as many archers, whom he put under the command of the Captal de Buche, and ordered to make a circuit, that they might fall on the flank or rear of the French army during the engagement. The van of his army was commanded by the earl of Warwick, the rear by the earls of Salisbury and Suffolk, the main body by the prince himself.

John also arranged his forces in three divisions; the first was commanded by the duke of Orleans, the king's brother; the second by the dauphin, attended by his two younger brothers; the third by the king himself, who had by his side Philip his fourth son and favourite, then about fourteen years of age. There was no reaching the English army but through a narrow lane, covered on each side by hedges; and in order to open this passage, the mareschals Andrehen and Clermont were ordered to advance with a separate detachment of men at arms. While they marched along the lane, a body of English archers, who lined the hedges, plied them on each side with their arrows; and being very near them, yet placed in perfect safety, they coolly took their aim against the enemy, and slaughtered them with impunity. The French detachment, much discouraged by the unequal combat, and diminishing in their number, arrived at the end of the lane, where they met on the open ground the prince of Wales himself, at the head of a chosen body, ready for their reception. They were discomfited and overthrown; one of the mareschals was slain, the other taken prisoner: and the remainder of the detachment, exposed to the shot of

of the enemy, without being able to make resistance, recoiled upon their own army, and put every thing into disorder. In that critical moment the Captal de Buche unexpectedly appeared, and attacked in flank the dauphin's line, which fell into some confusion. Landas, Bodenai, and St. Venant, to whom the care of that young prince and his brothers had been committed, too anxious for their charge or for their own safety, carried them off the field, and set the example of flight, which was followed by that of the whole division. The duke of Orleans, seized with a like panic, and imagining all was lost, thought no longer of fighting, but carried off his division by a retreat, which soon turned into a flight. The division under king John was still, however, more numerous than the whole English army; and the only resistance made that day was by his line of battle. The prince of Wales fell with impetuosity on some German cavalry placed in the front; a fierce battle ensued: one side was encouraged by the near prospect of so great a victory; the other was stimulated by the shame of quitting the field to an enemy so much inferior; but the German generals, together with the duke of Athens constable of France, falling in battle, that body of cavalry gave way, and left the king himself exposed to the whole fury of the enemy. The ranks were every moment thinned around him; the nobles fell by his side one after another; his son, scarce fourteen years of age, received a wound, while he was fighting valiantly in defence of his father. The king himself, spent with fatigue, and overwhelmed by numbers, might easily have been slain; but every England gentleman,

gentleman, ambitious of taking alive the royal prisoner, spared him in the action, exhorted him to surrender, and offered him quarter. Several who attempted to seize him suffered for their temerity. In this dilemma, he cried out, "Where is my cousin, the prince of Wales?" and seemed unwilling to become prisoner to any person of inferior rank; but being told that the prince was at a distance, he threw down his gauntlet, and yielded himself, together with his son, to Dennis de Morbec, a fugitive knight of Arras.

The moderation which Edward displayed on this occasion, has for ever stamped his character. At a repast which was prepared in his tent for his royal prisoner, he served behind his chair, as if he had been one of his retinue. He refused to seat himself at table with his majesty; all his father's pretensions to the crown of France were buried in oblivion; and John received, when a captive, those honours which had been denied him when on a throne.

A truce of two years followed the battle of Poictiers; and the prince of Wales availed himself of it, to conduct his royal prize in safety to England. He landed at Southwark, and was met by a vast concourse of people of all ranks. The prisoner was clad in royal apparel, and mounted on a white steed, distinguished by its size and beauty, and by the netting of its furniture: the conqueror rode by his side in a meaner attire, on a black palfrey. In this situation he passed through the streets of London, and presented the king of France to his father, who advanced to meet him, and re- A. D. 1357.

ceived

ceived him with the same courtesy as if he had voluntarily paid him a visit.

The most horrible anarchy in France, was produced by the captivity of John. The dauphin, though endowed with an excellent understanding, was scarcely eighteen years of age, and had neither experience nor authority sufficient to defend a state assailed at once by a foreign power and domestic faction. The streets of Paris were distracted by party broils, and not unfrequently polluted with blood. The other cities imitated the example of the capital: the soldiers, released from all discipline, subsisted themselves by plunder and robbery; the peasants rose against their former lords, levelled their castles, and often massacred their families, with circumstances of incredible barbarity. Every man was thrown loose and independent of his fellows; and licentiousness reigned without control.

During the height of the confusion, Edward had been prevented from pushing his conquests by the exhausted state of his finances. He had also flattered himself that he might obtain more solid advantages by negotiating with his royal prisoner, than by arms: John had even agreed to restore the provinces which had been possessed by Henry II. and his immediate successors, and to annex them to England without any obligation of homage. But the dauphin and the states rejected his treaty as dishonourable; and Edward, on the expiration of the truce, with an hundred thousand men again crossed the channel.

The French, however, had been taught prudence

dence by their former misfortunes. Instead of hazarding a decisive action, they kept within the walls of their cities; and though Edward ravaged at pleasure the open country, and even insulted the suburbs of Paris, he was not able to provoke them to risque a battle. This disappointment induced him to listen to more moderate terms; and, in a conference between the French and English commissioners at Bretigni, a peace was at last concluded on the subsequent conditions. It was stipulated that king John should be restored to his liberty, and should pay as his ransom three millions of crowns of gold;* the king of England should for ever renounce all claim to the crown of France, and to the provinces of Normandy, Maine, Touraine, and Anjou, possessed by his ancestors; and should receive in exchange in full sovereignty the provinces of Poictou, Xaintonge, l'Agenois, Perigort, the Limousin, Quercy, Rovergue, l'Angoumois, and other districts in that quarter, together with Calais, Guisnes, Montreuil, and the county of Ponthieu, on the other side of France; that Edward should renounce his confederacy with the Flemings, and John his connexions with the Scots; and that forty hostages should be sent to England as a security for the execution of these conditions.

A. D. 1360.

John was no sooner set at liberty, than he prepared to execute the terms, with that fidelity and honour which distinguished his character; but notwithstanding his endeavours, there occurred many difficulties in fulfilling his purposes. This induced him to

* About a million and an half sterling of our present money.

form

form the resolution of coming over to England, in order to adjust some disputes; and when his council endeavoured to dissuade him, he made the memorable answer, "that though good faith were banished from the rest of the earth, she ought still to retain her habitation in the breast of princes." He therefore crossed the seas, and was received with every mark of respect by Edward; but soon after falling sick, he died in London.

A. D. 1364. Charles the Dauphin, who succeeded him, immediately directed his attention to the internal disorders which afflicted his kingdom. His chief embarrassment proceeded from large bands of military adventurers who had followed the standard of Edward; but who on the conclusion of peace refused to lay down their arms, persevered in a life of rapine, and associated themselves under the name of "companions." Their leaders fought pitched battles with the troops of France; and wanted little but regular establishments to have become princes. Charles, unable to restrain them by force, thought of discharging into foreign countries, this dangerous and intestine evil.

Peter, king of Castile, who deserved and obtained the epithet of *Cruel*, had filled with blood and murder his kingdom and his own family; and having incurred the universal hatred of his subjects, his natural brother Henry, count of Transtamare, at last took arms against him; but being foiled in the attempt, he sought for refuge in France, and finding the minds of men extremely inflamed against Peter, asked permission of Charles to enlist the *companions* in his service, and to lead them into Castile; where, from

from the concurrence of his own friends, and the enemies of his brother, he had the prospect of certain and immediate success. The French king, charmed with the project, employed du Guesclin in negotiating with the leaders of these banditti. The treaty was soon concluded. The high character of honour which that general possessed, made every one trust to his promises; and though the intended expedition was kept a secret, the *companions* implicitly inlisted under his standard; requiring no other condition before their engagement, than an assurance that they were not to be led against the prince of Wales in Guienne. But that prince was then so little averse to the enterprise, that he allowed some gentlemen of his retinue to enter into the same service.

Du Guesclin having completed his levies, led them across the Pyrennees. The inhabitants of Castile joined the standard of the count of Transtamare; and the tyrant, justly odious, and generally deserted, fled from the indignation of his subjects, and sought refuge in Guienne. He solicited the protection of young Edward, whom his father had invested with the sovereignty of these conquered provinces, by the title of the principality of Aquitaine. That prince now regarding the fallen monarch with compassion, and dreading the powerful confederate that France might acquire in the new king of Castile, determined to restore Peter; and after levying a numerous army, he recalled the *companions* from the support of Henry. Most of these obeyed a voice they were accustomed to reverence; yet Henry, beloved by his new subjects, and reinforced by the king of Arragon,

beheld himself at the head of one hundred thousand men. Du Guesclin, and the most experienced generals, would have dissuaded him from hazarding an action with Edward, whose former success had inspired his troops with confidence, and his enemies with terror. But Henry trusted to his numbers, which trebled those of his adversary; and he ventured to encounter the English prince at Nagara. The host of Henry was routed with the loss of twenty thousand men; du Guesclin himself was taken prisoner; while only four knights and forty privates perished on the part of Edward.

Castile immediately submitted to Peter, who once more ascended the throne. But the satisfaction which the prince of Wales experienced in this perilous enterprise, was soon allayed by the ingratitude of the tyrant, who refused the reward which he had promised to the English; and Edward returned to Guienne, with his army diminished, and his own constitution fatally impaired by the climate.

The barbarities exercised by Peter over his subjects, revived all the animosity of the Castilians: the tyrant was again dethroned, and put to death, by his brother, who seated himself on the throne. The duke of Lancaster, the third son of the king of England, who espoused the eldest daughter of Peter, inherited only the empty title of that sovereignty, and by claiming the succession, increased the animosity of the new king of Castile to England.

Prince Edward, by this rash expedition, had involved himself in so much debt, that he found it necessary, on his return, to impose on Aquitaine a new tax on hearths: the people, disgusted by

by this measure, carried their complaints to Charles, their ancient sovereign, as to their lord paramount, against these oppressions of the English government.

By the treaty of Bretigny, Charles had renounced all claim of fealty over those provinces which were appropriated to England: but treaties seldom bind when at variance with interest. Charles affected to listen to the complaints of the deputies of Guienne, and at length summoned Edward to appear at his court at Paris, and justify his proceeding against his vassals. The answer of Edward was brief: "I will come indeed to Paris," replied the prince, "but it shall be at the head of sixty thousand men."

Charles immediately fell upon Ponthieu; while the southern provinces were invaded by his brothers the dukes of Berri and Anjou. In one action, Chandos, the constable of Guienne, was slain; in another, the captal of Buche, one of the best officers in the service of Edward, was made prisoner. The prince of Wales, debilitated by disease, was incapable of mounting on horseback, and returning to England, committed the conduct of the war to his generals. These were generally unfortunate; and after a series of losses, Edward was obliged to conclude a truce, after seeing almost all his ancient possessions in France, except Bourdeaux and Bayonne, ravished from him, and all his conquests except Calais. A.D. 1370.

The decline of the king's life indeed corresponded not with the preceding part of it. Besides the loss of his dominions abroad, he felt the decay of his authority at home. His youth had been occupied by ambition, but in his age he had

had indulged in pleasure: he had attached himself to Alice Pierce, whose ascendancy over him gave such general disgust, that, in order to satisfy the parliament, he was obliged to remove her from court; and to complete his mortifications, the prince of Wales * died, after a lingering illness, in the forty-sixth year of his age; leaving a character, illustrious for every eminent virtue, and unstained by any blemish. His valour and military talents formed the smallest part of his merit: his generosity, humanity, affability, moderation, gained him the affections of all men; and he was qualified to throw a lustre, not only on that rude age in which he lived, but on the most shining period either of ancient or modern history. The king survived about a year this melancholy incident: he expired in the sixty-fifth year of his age and the fifty-first of his reign; and the people were then sensible, though too late, of the irreparable loss which they had sustained.

The English are apt to consider with peculiar fondness the history of Edward the third, and to esteem his reign, as it was one of the longest, the most glorious also, that occurs in their annals. The ascendancy which they then began to acquire over France, their natural enemy, makes them cast their eyes on this period with great complacency, and sanctifies every measure which Edward embraced for that end. But the domestic government of this prince is really more admirable than his foreign victories; and Eng-

* Edward, surnamed the Black Prince, from the colour of his armour, was born at Woodstock, and buried at Canterbury.

land

land enjoyed, by the prudence and vigour of his administration, a longer interval of domestic peace and tranquillity than she had been blessed with in any former period, or than she experienced for many ages after. He gained the affections of the great, yet curbed their licentiousness; his affable and obliging behaviour, his munificence and generosity, made them submit with pleasure to his dominion; and his valour and conduct made them successful in most of their enterprises. On the policy or justice of his wars, we shall not enter. The glory of a conqueror is so dazzling to the vulgar, the animosity of nations is so violent, that the fruitless desolation of so fine a part of Europe as France, is totally disregarded by us, and is never considered as a blemish in the character or conduct of this prince.

Edward had a numerous posterity by his queen, Philippa of Hainault. His eldest son was the heroic Edward, who espoused his cousin Joan, commonly called the "Fair Maid of Kent," daughter and heir of his uncle, the earl of Kent, who was beheaded in the beginning of this reign. By her, the prince of Wales had a son Richard, who succeeded his grandfather.

The second son of king Edward, was Lionel duke of Clarence, who, dying while still young, left only one daughter, married to Edmund Mortimer earl of Marche. Of all the family, he resembled most his father and elder brother in his noble qualities.

Edward's third son was John of Gaunt, so called from the place of his birth: he was created duke of Lancaster; and from him sprang that branch which afterwards possessed the crown.

The fourth son of this royal family was Edmund, created duke of York; and the fifth was Thomas, who received the title of duke of Gloucester. By his queen, Edward had also four daughters, who arrived at maturity, and who all married.

Under the reign of Edward, the parliament arose to greater consideration than it had known during any former time: and even the house of commons, which, during turbulent and factious periods, was naturally depressed by the greater power of the crown and barons, began to assume its natural rank in the constitution, and to be distinguished by the liberality and wisdom of its proceedings.

CHAP. VII.

The Reigns of Richard II. *Henry* IV. *and Henry* V.

A. D. 1377. RICHARD, the only surviving son of Edward the Black Prince, was but eleven years of age when his grandfather expired; and, as the deceased monarch had taken no care to establish a plan of government during the minority of his grandson, it behoved the parliament to supply the defect. On this occasion, the commons took the lead: at their requisition, the house of lords appointed a council of nine, to whom they gave authority for a year to direct the public business, and to inspect the education of the young prince. The administration was conducted entirely in the king's name; no regency was expressly appointed; and the whole system was, for some years, kept

kept together by the secret authority of the king's uncles.

At the accession of Richard, England was involved in many dangerous wars: besides those with France and Scotland, the pretensions of the duke of Lancaster to Castile, were the source of hostilities with that country: Charles the fifth was indeed no more; and his son Charles the sixth was a minor; yet, though encouraged by this circumstance, the duke of Lancaster contented himself with ravaging Brittany; while the duke of Gloucester, with only two thousand cavalry, and eight thousand infantry, penetrated into the heart of France. Such, however, was the caution of the French, that they declined to hazard any decisive action; and these enterprises were only productive of a fruitless waste of blood and treasure.

To supply the latter, the parliament imposed a new tax of three groats on every person above fifteen years of age; but the minds of the populace were unfavourably disposed for this measure; and the principles of democracy gaining ground, this distich was frequently in the mouths of the multitude:

"When Adam delv'd and Eve span,
"Where was then the gentleman?"

While the nation strongly felt the impression of this dangerous question, the tax-gatherers demanded, of a blacksmith of Essex, payment for his daughter, whom he asserted to be under the age assigned by the statute. One of the collectors offering to produce a very indecent proof to the contrary, laid hold of the maid, which the father resenting, immediately knocked out the ruffian's brains with his hammer. The

cause

cause interested the vicinity; the people flew to arms; and the sedition spread from the county of Essex, into that of Kent, of Hertford, Surry, Sussex, and other neighbouring districts. The leaders assuming the feigned names of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw, committed the most outrageous violence on the gentry and nobility that had the misfortune to fall into their hands; and assembling their followers on Blackheath, to the number of an hundred thousand, they broke into the city, and required of the king the abolition of slavery, freedom of commerce in market towns without toll or impost, and a fixed rent of lands, instead of services of villainage.

Though charters to this purpose were granted them, parties of the insurgents continued to insult and plunder the capital; and the king passing along Smithfield, very slenderly guarded, met with Wat Tyler, at the head of his mob, and entered into a conference with him. Tyler having ordered his companions to retire, till he should give them a signal, to murder all the company, except the king himself, whom they they were to detain prisoner, fearlessly trusted himself in the midst of the royal retinue. He there behaved with such insolence, that Walworth, the mayor of London, in a fit of indignation drew his sword, and brought him to the ground, where he was instantly dispatched by others of the king's attendants. The mutineers, seeing their leader fall, prepared themselves for revenge; and this whole company, with the king himself, had undoubtedly perished on the spot, had it not been for an extraordinary presence of mind of Richard. Ordering his company to stop, he advanced alone towards the enraged

enraged multitude; and accosting them with an affable and intrepid countenance, asked them, "What is the meaning of this disorder, my good people? Are ye angry that ye have lost your leader? I am your king: I will be your leader." The populace, overawed by his presence, implicitly followed him; and having led them into the fields, to prevent any disorder which might have arisen by their continuing in the city, he peaceably dismissed them with the same charters which had been granted to their fellows. Soon after, the nobility and gentry, hearing of the king's danger, in which they were all involved, flocked to London with their adherents and retainers; and Richard took the field at the head of an army of forty thousand strong. The ebels were obliged to submit: the charters of enfranchisement and pardon were revoked by parliament; and several of the ringleaders were severely punished.

The address and courage which Richard displayed on this occasion, naturally inspired a hope, that he would, in the course of his life, rival the glories of his father and grandfather: but as he advanced in years, his want of judgment and temper appeared in every enterprise.

The subjection in which he was held by his uncles, particularly the duke of Gloucester, was extremely disagreeable to him. He had chosen for a favourite, Robert de Vere, earl of Oxford, a young man of a noble family, of an agreeable figure, but of dissolute manners; and had created him duke of Ireland, and transferred to him, by patent, the entire sovereignty of that island. The jealousy of power immediately produced an animosity between the minion and his

his creatures on the one hand, and the princes of the blood and the chief nobility on the other. The latter directed the house of commons to impeach Michael de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, and chancellor, a person of the greatest ability among those who were attached to the duke of Ireland. The king, at first, in hopes of stopping their proceedings, retired from the parliament; but this step only served to exasperate that assembly; and Richard, incapable of resistance, consented to return, on condition that no attack should be made on his other ministers.

The French, encouraged by these dissensions, and by the absence of the duke of Lancaster, with the flower of the English military force, in prosecution of his vain claim on Castile, attempted the invasion of England; but before their troops could embark, their fleet was dispersed by a violent storm, and several of their vessels were taken by the English.

For some time Gloucester and his associates maintained their recent engagements with the king; but they soon directed their attacks against his dignity, and framed a commission, by which the sovereign power was transferred to a council of fourteen persons for a twelvemonth. Richard, who had just entered his twenty-first year, signed, but secretly protested against this commission. His eager temper was, of itself, sufficiently inclined to seek the means both of recovering his authority, and of avenging its invasion. But his intentions had not escaped the vigilance of the duke of Gloucester and his adherents; and, to prevent him from executing them, they rapidly assembled their vassals, and appeared near Highgate, with a power

a power which Richard and his ministers were not able to resist. They now demanded, that the duke of Ireland, with several other obnoxious persons, should be delivered up to them as traitors. The former, after having in vain attempted to defend himself by arms, fled to the Low Countries, where he died a few years after in exile. The archbishop of York and the earl of Suffolk, who had been impeached with him, were fortunate enough to conceal themselves; but sir Robert Tresilian and sir Nicholas Brembre were seized and put to death. Sir Simon Bailey also, a gentleman who had distinguished himself by many honourable actions, and who had been appointed governor to Richard, by the choice of the late king and the Black Prince, fell a sacrifice on this occasion: nor could even the queen, whose amiable qualities had procured her the appellation of the "Good Queen Anne," obtain his pardon, though she knelt for three hours before the implacable Gloucester, soliciting this humble boon.

A. D. 1389.

In less than a year, however, it appears, that Richard regained his authority; though by what means, the imperfect history of this reign does not allow us to describe. All we know is, that he used it with great moderation; and, though he removed, for a time, the duke of Gloucester from his council, he never attempted to recal the duke of Ireland.

Soon after this, the duke of Lancaster returned from Spain, having resigned all pretensions to the crown of Castile. The authority of this prince served to counterbalance that of the duke of Gloucester; and Richard, who found his

his elder uncle more moderate than the younger, would have ceded to him the duchy of Guienne, could the consent of the inhabitants have been obtained. He found the means of gratifying him, however, in a different way. Lancaster, after the death of his first consort, had married Catherine Swineford, daughter of a private knight, of Hainault, by whose alliance York and Gloucester thought the dignity of their family much injured. But the king passed in parliament, a charter of legitimation to the children whom that lady had borne to his uncle before marriage, and even created the eldest earl of Somerset.

During these domestic transactions, the wars which Richard had inherited with his crown, still continued. On the northern borders, a fierce but indecisive action was fought between young Piercy, surnamed, from his impetuous valour, "Hotspur," and the earl of Douglas.* The former was taken prisoner, the latter killed. Some insurrections of the Irish obliged the king to make an expedition into that country, which he reduced to obedience; and recovered, in some degree, his character for courage. He soon after established a truce of twenty-five years with France; and, to render the amity of the two crowns more durable, and to fortify himself against his uncles and the barons, Richard, who was become a widower, was affianced to Isabella, the daughter of Charles, then only seven years of age.

The duke of Gloucester still continued his ca-

* This gave rise to the ancient popular ballad of Chevy Chace.

bals; and inveighed with indecent boldness against the conduct of the king, and the late truce with France. His imprudence revived the resentment that his former violence kindled; the precipitate temper of Richard allowed of no deliberation: he ordered Gloucester to be unexpectedly arrested, and to be conveyed to Calais, where alone, by reason of his numerous partisans, he could safely be detained in custody. A. D. 1397.

A parliament was immediately summoned at Westminster; and that assembly, in compliance with the wishes of the king, passed sentence against the duke of Gloucester and his associates, who had appeared against their sovereign, in an hostile manner, at Haringay Park. The earl of Arundel was executed, the earl of Warwick banished, though the crime for which they were condemned had been obliterated by time, and by repeated pardons. A warrant was issued to the earl mareschal, to bring over the duke of Gloucester, in order to his trial; but the governor returned for answer, that the duke had died suddenly of an apoplexy; though it afterwards appeared, that he had been suffocated by the order of Richard.

After the destruction of the duke of Gloucester, and the heads of that party, a rupture ensued between the noblemen who had joined in the prosecution. The duke of Hereford, son to the duke of Lancaster, accused the duke of Norfolk of having spoken many slanderous words of the king. Norfolk denied the charge, and offered to prove his own innocence by duel; the challenge was accepted; but when the two champions appeared in the field, the king interposed; and, to prevent the effusion of blood, commanded

commanded both to leave the kingdom, assigning one country for the place of Norfolk's exile, which he declared perpetual; and another for that of Hereford, which he limited to ten years.

The submission which Hereford affected on this occasion, induced the king to shorten his exile four years; and he also granted him letters patent, by which he was empowered, in case any inheritance should, in the interval, accrue to him, to enter immediately into possession, and to postpone the doing of homage until his return. But his jealousy was soon awakened by being informed that Hereford had entered into a treaty of marriage with the daughter of the duke of Berry, uncle to the French king; and on the death of the duke of Lancaster, which happened soon after, Richard revoked his letters patent, and seized the estate of his deceased uncle, Henry of Hereford, who was now become duke of Lancaster, and who, to the praises of prudence and penetration, had joined those of piety and valour. His private misfortunes were lamented, as if they had been a common cause; and all men turned their eyes towards him, as the only person who could retrieve the lost honour of the nation, which had been tarnished by various events.

While such were the dispositions of the people, Richard had the imprudence to embark for Ireland, in order to revenge the death of his cousin, Roger earl of Marche, the presumptive heir of the crown, who had lately been slain in a skirmish with the natives; and thereby left England open to the attempts of his provoked and ambitious rival. Henry, embarking at Nantz with a retinue of sixty persons, among whom were

were the archbishop of Canterbury and the young earl of Arundel, nephew to that prelate, landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire; and was immediately joined by the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, two of the most potent barons in England. Here he took a solemn oath, that he had no other purpose in this invasion, than to recover the duchy of Lancaster, unjustly detained from him; and he invited all his friends in England, and all lovers of their country, to second him in this reasonable and moderate pretension. Every place was in commotion: the malcontents in all quarters flew to arms; and Henry's army, increasing on every day's march, soon amounted to the number of sixty thousand fighting men.

The duke of York, who had been left guardian of the realm, but for which he was ill qualified in such a dangerous emergency, appointed the rendezvous of his forces at St. Alban's, and soon assembled an army of forty thousand men; but finding them entirely destitute of zeal and attachment to the royal cause, and more inclined to join the party of the rebels, he readily listened to a message from Henry, who entreated him not to oppose a loyal and humble supplicant in the recovery of his legal patrimony. The guardian even declared publicly that he would second his nephew in so reasonable a request. His army embraced with acclamations the same measures; and the duke of Lancaster, with this reinforcement, was now entirely master of the kingdom.

The king, receiving intelligence of this formidable insurrection, hastened over from Ireland, and landed in Milford Haven with a body

of twenty thousand men: but even this army, so much inferior to the enemy, gradually deserted him, till he found that he had not above six thousand men who followed his standard. Sensible of his danger, he privately fled to the Isle of Anglesea, where he purposed to embark either for Ireland or France, and there await the favourable opportunities which the return of his subjects to a sense of duty, or their future discontents against the duke of Lancaster, would probably afford him. From this asylum he was drawn by the treachery of the earl of Northumberland, who, with the strongest professions of loyalty and submission, made himself master of the king's person, and carried him to his enemy at Flint Castle. Richard was conducted to London by the duke of Lancaster, who was there received with the acclamations of the mutinous populace; and, issuing writs of election in the king's name, he appointed the immediate meeting of a parliament at Westminster.

It is natural to suppose, that the house of commons, elected during this universal ferment and triumph of the Lancastrian party, would be extremely attached to that cause, and ready to record every suggestion of their leaders. Not ignorant of this, the duke of Lancaster began to carry his views to the crown itself. He first extorted a resignation from Richard; but as he knew this deed would appear the result of force, he purposed, notwithstanding the danger of the precedent to himself and his posterity, to have him solemnly deposed in parliament, for his pretended tyranny and misconduct. A charge, consisting of thirty-three articles, was accordingly drawn up against him, and, though most

of

of them were frivolous, or had been sanctioned by the custom of his predecessors, both houses of parliament seem to have received them with universal approbation. One man alone, the bishop of Carlisle, had the courage, amidst this general disloyalty, to appear in defence of his unhappy master. His generous magnanimity, however honourable to himself, was of no service to the unfortunate monarch; and his freedom, instead of being applauded, was not even tolerated: he was arrested by the order of the duke of Lancaster, and sent prisoner to the abbey of St. Alban's.

This severity put an end to the debate: the charges were voted against Richard; and voted unanimously by the same peers and prelates, who a little before had voluntarily authorized those very acts of violence, of which they now complained. That prince was deposed by the suffrages of both houses; and the throne being now vacant, the duke of Lancaster stepped forth, and having made the sign of the cross, pronounced these words, which we shall give in the original idiom and orthography:

"In the name of Fadher, Son, and Holy Ghost, I Henry of Lancaster challenge this rewme of Ynglande, and the croun, with all the membres, and the appurtenances; als I that am descendit by right line of the blode coming fro the gude king Henry therde, and throge that right that God of his grace hath sent me, with helpe of kyn, and of my frendes to recover it; the which rewme was in poynt to be ondone by default of governance, and ondoying of the gude laws."

The earl of Northumberland made a motion in the house of peers with regard to the unhappy prince

prince whom they had deposed; asking what advice they would give the king for the future treatment of him, since Henry was resolved to spare his life. They unanimously replied, that he should be imprisoned under a secure guard in some secret place, and should be deprived of all commerce with his friends and partisans. Kings seldom long survive their degradation: historians, however, differ with regard to the manner in which he was murdered. It was long the prevailing opinion, that sir Piers Exton, and others of his guards, fell upon him in the castle of Pomfret, where he was confined, and dispatched him with their halberts. But it is more probable that he was starved to death in prison;
A. D. for after his body was exposed in public,
1400. no marks of violence were found upon
it. He died in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-third of his reign, leaving no posterity, either legitimate or illegitimate.

Richard appears to have been incapacitated for government; less for want of natural parts, than of solid judgment and a good education. He was violent in his temper; profuse in his expence; fond of idle show and grandeur; devoted to favourites; and addicted to pleasure. He lived in a more magnificent manner than any who reigned before or after him: his household consisted of ten thousand persons; he had three hundred in the kitchen, and all other offices were filled in proportion.

During the reign of this prince, the established church was attacked by John Wickliffe, a secular priest educated at Oxford, a man of parts and learning; and who has the honour of being the first person in Europe, that publicly called

in question those principles which had universally passed for certain and undisputed during so many ages. Wickliffe himself, as well as his disciples who received the name of Wickliffites or Lollards, was distinguished by a great austerity of manners; and his tenets, derived from his search into the scriptures, were nearly the same with those which were propagated by the reformers in the sixteenth century. As for himself, he seems not to have been actuated by the spirit of enthusiasm; and in all examinations he so explained away his doctrine by tortured meanings, as to render it quite innocent and inoffensive. Most of his followers imitated his cautious disposition, and saved themselves, either by recantations or evasions. He died of a palsy in the year 1385, and though the clergy took care to assure the people of his eternal damnation, his opinions still gathered strength in England, and were even transplanted to Bohemia; but the age, however strongly disposed to receive them, was not ripe for this great revolution.

Such was the religious state of England, when Henry the fourth ascended the throne; but his attention to establish himself in it, left him little leisure for theological inquiries, and inclined him to court the assistance of the church.

In his very first parliament, he had reason to see the danger attending that station which he had assumed, and the obstacles which he would meet with in governing an unruly aristocracy, always divided by faction, and at present inflamed with the resentments consequent on such recent convulsions. The peers, on their assembling, broke out in such violent animosities against each other, that forty gauntlets, the pledges of furious

furious battle, were thrown on the floor of the house, by noblemen who gave mutual challenges; and *liar* and *traitor* resounded from all quarters. The king, however, had so much authority with these doughty champions, as to prevent the effusion of blood; but he was not able to bring them to a proper composure, or to introduce an amicable disposition among them.

Not long after, the earls of Rutland, Kent, and Huntingdon, and lord Spencer, who were now degraded from the respective titles of Albemarle, Surrey, Exeter, and Gloucester, conferred on them by Richard, entered into a conspiracy, together with the earl of Salisbury, and lord Lumley, for raising an insurrection, and for seizing the king's person at Windsor; but the treachery of Rutland warded off the blow. Henry suddenly withdrew to London; and the conspirators, who came to Windsor with a body of five hundred horse, found they had missed their aim, and exposed themselves to inevitable ruin. Henry appeared next day at Kingston upon Thames, at the head of twenty thousand men; and his enemies, unable to resist his power, dispersed themselves, with a view of raising their followers in the several counties, where they had most interest. But the adherents of the king were hot in the pursuit, and every where opposed themselves to their progress. The earls of Kent and Salisbury were seized at Cirencester; and were next day beheaded without farther ceremony. The citizens of Bristol treated Spencer and Lumley in the same manner. The earl of Huntingdon, sir Thomas Blount, and sir Benedict Sely, who were also taken prisoners, suffered death, with many others of the conspirators, by orders from Henry. And when

when the quarters of these unhappy men were brought to London, no less than eighteen bishops and thirty-two mitred abbots joined the populace, and met them with the most indecent marks of joy and exultation. The earl of Rutland, the seducer and betrayer of his associates, as if he meant to bid defiance to decency and humanity, appeared, carrying on a pole the head of lord Spencer, his brother-in law, which he presented in triumph to Henry, as a testimony of his loyalty.

It could not escape the sagacity of Henry, that, though the execution of these conspirators might seem to give security to his throne, the animosities which remain after such bloody scenes, are always dangerous to regal authority. He therefore determined not to increase by any hazardous enterprise the numerous enemies with whom he was every where environed. While a subject, he was believed to have adopted the prejudices of the Lollards; but on the throne he readily sacrificed his principles to his interest; and, to gratify the vengeance of the church on their opponents, he procured a law from the parliament, which enacted, that when any heretic, who relapsed, or refused to abjure his opinions, was delivered over to the secular arm by the bishops, he should be committed to the flames by the civil magistrate. This dangerous engine did not long remain unemployed; and William Sautré, rector of St. Osithes in London, having been condemned by the convocation of Canterbury, atoned for his reputed heresy, by suffering the punishment of fire.

But the utmost prudence could not shield Henry from those inquietudes which assailed him

him from every quarter. The connexions of Richard with the royal family of France, made that court exert its activity to restore his authority, or revenge his death. A truce, however, being found necessary, was concluded between the two kingdoms; and Henry was enabled by these means, to turn his attention towards Wales.

Owen Glendour, descended from the ancient princes of that country, had become obnoxious on account of his attachment to Richard; in consequence of which, lord Grey, a nobleman connected with the new king, had seized his estate: but Glendour recovered possession by force; the Welsh armed on his side; a long and doubtful war was kindled; and as Glendour committed devastations on the estate of the earl of Marche, who had the best pretensions to the throne, sir Edmund Mortimer, uncle to that nobleman, led out the retainers of the family against the Welsh chieftain. His troops were routed, and the earl himself, still in his minority, was made prisoner, and out of jealousy, suffered to remain in captivity.

The critical situation of Henry had induced the Scots to make incursions into England; and to chastise them, the king conducted his followers without opposition to Edinburgh; but finding the Scots would neither submit nor give him battle, he returned in three weeks, and disbanded his army. In the following year, Archibald earl of Douglas, at the head of twelve thousand men, made an irruption into England, and committed devastations on the northern counties. On his return home, he was overtaken by the Piercies at Homeldon, on the borders of England, and a fierce battle ensued, where the Scots were

were totally routed. Douglas himself was taken prisoner, as was Mordac earl of Fife, son of the duke of Albany, with many others of the gentry and nobility.

The obligations which Henry had owed to Northumberland were of a kind the most likely to produce ingratitude on the one side, and discontent on the other. The sovereign naturally became jealous of that power which had advanced him to the throne; and the subject was not easily satisfied in the returns which he thought so great a favour had merited. Though Henry, on his accession, had bestowed the office of constable on Northumberland for life, and conferred other gifts on that family, these favours were regarded as their due; the refusal of any other request was deemed an injury. The impatient spirit of Harry Piercy, and the factious disposition of the earl of Worcester, younger brother of Northumberland, inflamed the discontents of that nobleman; and the precarious title of Henry tempted him to seek revenge, by overturning that throne which he had at first established. He entered into a correspondence with Glendour; he gave liberty to the earl of Douglas, and made an alliance with that martial chief; he roused up all his partisans to arms; and such unlimited authority at that time belonged to the great families, that the same men, whom a few years before he had conducted against Richard, now followed his standard in opposition to Henry. When hostilities were ready to commence, Northumberland was seized with a sudden illness at Berwick; and young Piercy taking the command of the troops, marched towards Shrewsbury, in order to join his forces with those of

of Glendour. The king had fortunately a small army on foot; and knowing the importance of celerity in all civil wars, he hastened to come up with Piercy, before that nobleman was joined by Glendour.

The policy of one leader, and impatience of the other, made them hasten to a general engagement; and scarcely shall we find any battle in those ages, where the shock was more terrible and more constant. Henry exposed his person in the thickest of the fight: his gallant son, whose military achievements were afterwards so renowned, and who here performed his noviciate in arms, signalized himself in the most illustrious degree, and even a wound, which he received in the face with an arrow, could not oblige him to quit the field. Piercy supported that fame which he had acquired in many a bloody combat; and Douglas, his ancient enemy, and now his friend, still appeared his rival, amidst the horror and confusion of the day. This nobleman performed feats of valour which are almost incredible; but while the armies were contending in this furious manner, the death of Piercy, by an unknown hand, decided the victory, and the royalists prevailed. There are said to have fallen that day, on both sides, near two thousand three hundred gentlemen; among whom were many persons of the first distinction. About six thousand private men perished, of whom two thirds were of Piercy's army. The earls of Worcester and Douglas were taken prisoners; the former was beheaded at Shrewsbury; the latter was treated with the courtesy due to his rank and his bravery.

No sooner, however, was the earl of Northumberland

umberland recovered from his sickness, than he levied a fresh army, and was on his march to join his son; but being opposed by the earl of Westmoreland, and hearing of the defeat at Shrewsbury, he dismissed his forces, and came with a small retinue to the king at York. He pretended that his sole intention in arming, was to mediate between the parties; and Henry, who behaved with great lenity to most of the insurgents, thought proper to accept the apology, and dismissed him with forgiveness.

The earl of Northumberland, though he had been pardoned, knew that he should never be trusted; he therefore formed a new confederacy in conjunction with the earl of Nottingham, son of the duke of Norfolk, and the archbishop of York, brother to the earl of Wiltshire, whom Henry, when duke of Lancaster, had beheaded at Bristol: but some of the principal confederates being betrayed into the king's hands, and put to death, before the plan was ripe for execution, the valiant Piercy, on receiving this intelligence, fled into Scotland, together with lord Bardolf; and the king, without opposition, reduced all the castles and fortresses belonging to these noblemen. He thence turned his arms against Glendour, over whom his son, the prince of Wales, had obtained some advantages: but that enemy, more troublesome than dangerous, still found means of defending himself in his fastnesses, and of eluding, though not resisting, all the force of England. In a subsequent campaign, the earl of Northumberland and lord Bardolf, impatient of their exile, entered the north, in hopes of raising the people to arms; but found the country in such a posture, as rendered

dered all their attempts unsuccessful. Sir Thomas Rokesby, sheriff of Yorkshire, levied some forces, attacked the invaders at Bramham, and gained a victory, in which both Northumberland and Bardolf were slain. This success, joined to the death of Glendour, which happened soon after, freed Henry from all his domestic enemies; and this prince, who had mounted the throne by such unjustifiable means, and held it by such an exceptionable title, by his valour, prudence, and address, had now obtained a greater ascendant over his subjects than most of his predecessors could boast.

About the same time, another accident was peculiarly favourable to Henry. Robert III. king of the Scots, was a prince of slender capacity; his brother, the duke of Albany, a prince of more abilities but less integrity, had assumed the government of the state. Ambitious of the crown, he had already laid violent hands on David, the eldest son of the king; and to save the life of James the younger, the father embarked him for France. The vessel was taken by the English; and though there subsisted a truce between the kingdom, Henry, in violation of every law of honour and justice, refused to restore the prince. The shock was too much for the feeble constitution of Robert; he died; and the duke of Albany continued to govern the kingdom, but was held in dependence by Henry, who had it in his power to restore the true heir, whenever the posture of his affairs required it.

With a design to weaken the pretensions of the earl of Marche, Henry had procured a settlement of the crown on himself and his heirs-male; but the long contests with France, had displayed

displayed the injustice of the Salic laws; and the parliament, apprehensive that they had violated the principles of the English government, applied with such earnestness for a new settlement that Henry yielded to their request; and agreed to the succession of the princesses of his family. But though the commons shewed a laudable zeal for liberty in these transactions, their efforts against the church were still more extraordinary. In the sixth of Henry, being required to grant supplies, they proposed in plain terms to the king, that he should seize all the temporalities of the church, and employ them as a perpetual fund to serve the exigencies of the state. They insisted, that the clergy possessed a third of the lands of the kingdom; that they contributed nothing to the public burdens; and that their riches tended only to disqualify them from performing their ministerial functions with proper zeal and attention. The king, however, discouraged the application of the commons; and the lords rejected the bill which the lower house had framed, for stripping the church of her revenues.

The commons, not discouraged by this repulse, in the eleventh of the king returned to the charge with more zeal than before: they made a calculation of all the ecclesiastical revenues, which, by their account, amounted to four hundred and eighty-five thousand marks a year, and contained eighteen thousand four hundred ploughs of land. They proposed to divide this property among fifteen new earls, one thousand five hundred knights, six thousand esquires, and a hundred hospitals; besides twenty thousand pounds a year, which the king might take for

his own use; and they insisted, that the clerical functions would be better performed than at present, by fifteen thousand parish priests, paid at the rate of seven marks a piece of yearly stipend. This application was accompanied with an address for mitigating the statutes enacted against the Lollards. To this unjust and chimerical proposal, the king gave a severe reply; and farther to satisfy the church, and to prove that he was zealous in support both of its temporal and spiritual rights, he ordered a Lollard to be committed to the flames.

Such are the principal events of this busy and active reign. The king was so much employed in defending his crown that he had little leisure to look abroad. His health declined some months before his death, and though he was in the flower of his age, his end was visibly approaching. He expired at Westminster, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and the thirteenth of his reign; leaving four sons, Henry his successor, Thomas duke of Clarence, John duke of Bedford, and Humphrey duke of Gloucester; and two daughters, Blanche married to the duke of Bavaria, and Philippa to the king of Denmark.

A. D. 1413.

Henry IV. possessed a remarkable command of temper; his courage, both military and political, was without blemish; and he possessed many qualities which fitted him for so high a station, and which rendered his usurpation, though pernicious in aftertimes, rather salutary during his own reign, to the English nation.

The situation of the deceased monarch had so infected him with jealousies, that he even regarded with distrust his eldest son, and had carefully

carefully excluded him from public business. The active spirit of the prince, however, restrained from its proper exercise, broke out into extravagancies of every kind. He indulged in pleasure, and in riot; and associated with the most worthless companions. There remains a tradition, that, when heated with liquor and jollity, he scrupled not to attack and plunder the passengers in the streets and highways. This extreme dissoluteness was not less disagreeable to his father, than would have been his application to business; and Henry, in his son's behaviour, dreaded the same neglect of decency that had proved so fatal to Richard. But the nation was less severe in the judgment on the young prince: they observed in him the seeds of generosity, spirit, and magnanimity; and there happened an incident which more clearly developed his real character. A riotous companion of the prince's had been indicted before Gascoigne, the chief justice, for some disorders; and Henry was not ashamed to appear at the bar with the criminal, in order to give him countenance and protection. Finding that his presence did not overawe the chief justice, he proceeded to insult that magistrate on his tribunal; but Gascoigne, mindful of the dignity of his own station, and the majesty of the sovereign and of the laws, which he sustained, ordered the prince to be carried to prison, for his indecent behaviour; and the spectators, with pleasure, saw the heir of the crown submit peaceably to this sentence, and make reparation for his error by acknowledging it.

The memory of this incident, and of many others of a like nature, rendered the prospect

 of

of the future reign nowise disagreeable to the nation; and the first steps taken by the young prince confirmed all those prepossessions entertained in his favour. He called together his former companions, acquainted them with his intended reformation, exhorted them to imitate his example, but strictly inhibited them, till they had given proofs of their sincerity in this particular, from appearing any more in his presence; and then dismissed them with liberal presents. The wise ministers of his father, who had checked his riots, were received with all the marks of favour and confidence; and the chief justice himself, met with praises instead of reproaches for his past conduct, and was exhorted to persevere in the same rigorous and impartial execution of the laws. The surprise of those who expected an opposite behaviour, augmented their satisfaction; and the character of the young king appeared brighter than if it had never been shaded by any errors of conduct.

But Henry was anxious not only to repair his misconduct, but to make amends for the injuries into which policy had betrayed his father. He received the earl of Marche, with singular courtesy and favour; he restored the family of Piercy to its fortune and honours; and, anxious to bury all party-distinctions, he regarded merit alone in his promotions.

The Lollards, however, who were rapidly increasing, were doomed to feel his rigour. The head of this sect was sir John Oldcastle, lord Cobham, a nobleman who had acquired the esteem both of the late and present king. His high character pointed him out to the archbishop of Canterbury, as the proper victim of ecclesiastical severity:

severity: he applied to Henry for a permission to indict him; that prince, averse to sanguinary methods, endeavoured by a conversation with Cobham, to reconcile him to the catholic faith. He, however, found him firm in his opinions; and the king's principles of toleration could carry him no farther. He abandoned him to the resentment of the church; and Cobham was indicted by the primate and his suffragans, and was condemned to the flames for his erroneous tenets. He escaped from the Tower, and his daring spirit, provoked by persecution and stimulated by zeal, prompted him to the most criminal enterprises. He appointed a general rendezvous of his party, in order to seize the person of the king, and to put their religious enemies to the sword; but the design was betrayed to Henry; and his vigilance prevented its effects. It appeared a few only were in the secret: of these some were executed; Cobham himself had fled, and was not brought to justice till four years after, when he was hanged as a traitor, and his body burnt on the gibbet.

But though the nation was not yet sufficiently enlightened to receive the doctrines of Wickliffe, a reformation in discipline was generally desired: even the parliament that was summoned immediately after the detection of Cobham's conspiracy, though they passed several laws against heresy, entreated the king to seize all the ecclesiastical revenues, and convert them to the use of the crown; and it was to divert the king's attention from this object, that Chichely, archbishop of Canterbury, endeavoured to persuade him to undertake a war against France, in order to recover the lost rights of his ancestors.

Charles

Charles the sixth, king of France, in the administation of that country had discovered early symptoms of genius and spirit; but the unhappy prince being seized with an epileptic disorder, his judgment was gradually but sensibly impaired. The administration of affairs was disputed by his brother, Lewis duke of Orleans, and his cousin-german, John duke of Burgundy: the people were divided between these contending princes; and the king, now resuming, now dropping his authority, kept the victory undecided, and prevented any regular settlement of the state by the final prevalence of either party.

At length, the dukes of Orleans and Burgundy, seeming to be moved by the cries of the nation and by the interposition of common friends, agreed to bury all past quarrels in oblivion, and to enter into strict amity: they swore before the altar the sincerity of their friendship; the priest administered the sacrament to both of them: but all this solemn preparation was only a cover for the basest treachery, which was deliberately premeditated by the duke of Burgundy. He procured his rival to be assassinated in the streets of Paris; and being detected in his baseness, he embraced a resolution still more criminal and more dangerous to society, by openly avowing and defending it.

The princes of the blood combining with the young duke of Orleans and his brothers, with all the violence of party rage, made war on the duke of Burgundy; and the unhappy king, seized sometimes by one party, sometimes by the other, transferred alternately to each the appearance of legal authority. The provinces were laid waste by mutual depredations; and the

the whole kingdom was distinguished into two furious factions.

The advantage which might be derived from these distractions was plainly perceived in England; but Henry, before he had recourse to arms, endeavoured to obtain his ends by negotiation. Accordingly he sent over ambassadors to Paris offering a perpetual peace and alliance; but demanding Catherine, the French king's daughter, in marriage, two millions of crowns as her portion, one million six hundred thousand as the arrears of king John's ransom, and the immediate possession and full sovereignty of Normandy, and of all other provinces which had been ravished from England by the arms of Philip Augustus; together with the superiority of Brittany and Flanders. The terms offered by the French court, though much inferior, discover a consciousness of their miserable situation. They were willing to give him the princess in marriage, to pay him eight hundred thousand crowns, to resign the entire sovereignty of Guienne, and to annex to that province the countries of Perigord, Rovergue, Xaintonge, the Angoumois, and other territories.

Henry, however, rejected these conditions; and having assembled a great fleet and army at Southampton, he came to the sea side with the purpose of embarking on his expedition; and relying on the aid of the duke of Burgundy, who had recently solicited his alliance, he put to sea with six thousand men at arms, and twenty-four thousand foot, landed at Harfleur, and obliged that city, after a resolute defence, to capitulate.

By this time, a French army of fourteen thousand

sand men at arms, and forty thousand foot, was assembled in Normandy, under the constable d'Albert; while the fatigues of the siege, and the uncommon heat of the season, had wasted the number of the English to one half of their original force. Henry, sensible of the difficulties which must have attended his march to Calais, offered to purchase a safe retreat at the expence of his new conquest of Harfleur; but the army of the constable, already joined by the dauphin, and the princes of the blood, rejected the proposal; and the king of England found he must place his sole reliance on his own conduct and valour. He slowly pointed his march towards the river Somme, which he hoped to pass at the same ford as had proved so auspicious to his predecessor Edward. In this he was disappointed by the precautions of the French. At length, however, he surprised a passage near St. Quentin; but he had scarcely reached the opposite side, before the French, who pressed upon his footsteps, traversed the Somme also, and posted themselves, between the English army and Calais, on the plains of Agincourt.

Henry no sooner found his retreat intercepted by the appearance of the enemy, than he drew up his army on a narrow ground, between two woods, which guarded each flank; and patiently awaited the charge of his foes, whose numbers four times exceeded his own, and who might by forbearance have extinguished their adversary without a blow. In the battle of Agincourt, however, we review that of Poictiers: the French charged with the same contempt of danger and discipline; the English received them with the same cool and deliberate intrepidity. The former were

were led on by a generous nobility, and encouraged by their superior numbers; the latter were animated by the presence of their king, and the memory of ancient glory: the event was such as might be expected, the French were disordered by their own impetuosity, and their numbers served only to increase their confusion and disgrace. Their cavalry were entangled in the heavy ground on which they engaged, and, incapable of flight or resistance, were slaughtered by the battle-axes of the English. The constable himself, the count de Nevers, and the duke of Brabant, both brothers to the duke of Burgundy, the dukes of Alençon and Barre, the counts of Vaudemont and Marle, scorning to survive this national calamity, rushed into the midst of the tumult, and perished with above ten thousand of their followers. The dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, and several other persons of distinction, and above fourteen thousand of inferior rank, were taken prisoners: A. D. while on the side of the English, the 1415. duke of York was the only person of consequence who fell; and their whole loss did not exceed forty men.

Henry immediately pursued his triumphant march to Calais; but the small number of his troops did not allow him to improve his advantages; and his want of money induced him soon after to conclude a truce, for two years, with the enemy, during which the dissentions and miseries of the French seem to have increased.

The queen and the dauphin alternately usurped the powers of government: the former at last prevailed, and associating with the duke of Burgundy,

Burgundy, fixed the seat of her independent residence at Troyes; and sanctioned by her name the enterprises of her new ally against the ministers of her son, who, she asserted, detained her royal consort in captivity.

A. D. 1418. Henry the fifth had landed again in Normandy, and reduced that fertile province to his obedience. Lisle Adam, one of the captains of the duke of Burgundy, suddenly presented himself before the gates of Paris; was admitted into the city, by the partiality or treachery of a burgher; and headed an insurrection of the people, in which the person of the king was seized, and the count of Armagnac, the chancellor, and the principal adherents of the Orleans party, were inhumanly massacred. The dauphin himself escaped with difficulty, through the vigilance and address of Tannigue de Chastle; and rejecting the solicitations of his mother to return to Paris, secured himself within the walls of Poictiers.

The king of England, with an army superior to open resistance, had already shaken the walls of Rouen. Yet Henry was sensible what obstacles still remained for him to surmount; he had already experienced the difficulties of procuring supplies from the English parliament, and his coffers were exhausted by a succession of victories. However flattering the prospect might be to his ambition, his policy induced him gradually to lessen his demands; and he fixed, as the price of peace, his marriage with the princess Catharine, and all the provinces ceded to Edward the third by the treaty of Bretigny, with the addition of Normandy, which he was to receive in full and intire sovereignty.

reignty. Isabella, insatiate of revenge against her personal enemies, instantly closed with the terms proposed. But the duke of Burgundy still hesitated to subscribe a treaty so pernicious to his country, and pressing his negotiations with the dauphin, consented to an accommodation to rescue his country from destruction.

An interview was appointed between the two princes at the bridge of Montereau-sur-Youne; but no sooner was the duke of Burgundy in their power, than the attendants of the dauphin pierced him with numerous wounds. His friends, astonished and incapable of resistance, were either taken prisoners, or involved in his fate.

The youth of the dauphin had made it doubtful whether he was admitted into the secret; but the deed was committed under his eye; and in his more mature years he distinguished by marks of affection and confidence the perpetrators of the flagitious action. The bands of civil society were loosened by the royal example; and the flames of war, which might have been extinguished, or their fury at least assuaged, broke forth with an increase of violence. Isabella, loud in her complaints, and impatient for vengeance, instantly bestowed the hand of Catherine on Henry, and celebrated their nuptials at Troyes in Champagne. Philip, the son of the duke of Burgundy, and who succeeded to the honours and dominions of his father, joined the English standard, and only stipulated the marriage of his sister with the duke of Bedford, the brother of Henry, and the proscription of his father's assassins. The city of Paris, long partial to the house of Burgundy, rose in arms, and filled every street with scenes

of bloody tumult; while the unhappy Charles the sixth, sunk into imbecility, and delivered into the hands of the natural enemy of his country, sanctioned by his name the unbounded ambition of Henry, and the implacable passions of Isabella.

In the new treaty concluded in the names of the kings of France and England, and the duke of Burgundy, it was agreed, that Charles during his life, should enjoy the title and dignity of king of France; that Henry should be declared heir, and immediately entrusted with the reins of government, and that that kingdom should pass to his heirs general; that France and England should be for ever united under one king, but should still retain their several usages, customs, and privileges. To push his present advantages, Henry, a few days after he espoused the princess Catherine, carried his father-in-law to Paris, and put himself in possession of that capital. He then turned his arms against the dauphin, who, on the intelligence of the treaty of Troyes, had assumed the title of regent, was received into Sens and Montereau, and, after long resistance, reduced Melun. The king of England crossed the channel to procure fresh supplies, and having levied a new army of twenty-four thousand archers, and four thousand horsemen, hastened his return to France.

The detention of the young king of Scots in England had hitherto proved advantageous to Henry, by keeping the regent in awe; but when intelligence arrived in Scotland of the near prospect of his succession to the crown of France, the nation was alarmed, and foresaw their own inevitable ruin, if the subjection of their ally left

left them to combat alone a victorious and more powerful enemy. Under this impression, the regent permitted a body of seven thousand Scots, under the command of the earl of Buchan, his second son, to be transported into France for the service of the dauphin. To render this aid ineffectual, Henry had, in his former expedition, carried over the king of Scots, whom he obliged to send orders to his countrymen, to leave the French service; but the Scottish general replied, that he would obey no command which came from a king in captivity. These troops, therefore, continued still to act under the earl of Buchan; and were employed by the dauphin to oppose the progress of the duke of Clarence in Anjou. The two armies encountered at Baugé: the English were defeated; the duke himself was slain by a Scotch knight, who commanded a company of men at arms; and the earls of Somerset, Dorset, and Huntingdon, were taken prisoners. This was the first action that turned the tide of success against the English; and the dauphin, that he might both attach the Scotch to his service, and reward the valour and conduct of the earl of Buchan, honoured that nobleman with the office of constable.

The arrival of the king of England, however, with so considerable an army was more than sufficient to repair this loss. He was received at Paris with the acclamations of the citizens; and immediately led his army to the relief of Chartres, which was besieged by the dauphin. That prince was compelled to retire before the superior numbers of his rival, who pursued him as far as Orleans. On his return he received the

 submission

submission of Dreux; and at the request of the Parisians besieged Meaux, which held out for eight months, when it surrendered; and Henry immediately commanded the governor to be suspended from a neighbouring tree.

Soon after, intelligence arrived that queen Catherine was delivered of a son at Windsor. The event was celebrated by equal rejoicing at Paris and at London; the royal infant, who was baptized by the name of his father, Henry, was considered as the successor to both kingdoms, and seemed to extinguish even the hopes of the dauphin. That prince, chased beyond the Loire, deserted entirely by the northern provinces, destitute of treasures and troops to oppose his prosperous competitor, prepared to meet with fortitude the destruction which it seemed impossible to avoid; when he was preserved by one of those vicissitudes in mortal life, which so often baffle the plans of the most profound policy, and decide the fate of empires.

A. D. 1422.

Henry had determined to open the ensuing campaign with the invasion of Picardy, and appeared in the field early in the month of July. The united forces of the English and Burgundians threatened to overwhelm all opposition; but amidst the pride of victory, and the prospect of dominion, he was attacked by a complaint, which the ignorance of the age rendered mortal. A fistula, with which he was seized, soon terminated in a mortification; and Henry, sensible of his approaching end, devoted, with manly firmness, the few remaining moments of life to the concerns of his kingdom and his family, and to the pious duties of religion.

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To the duke of Bedford, his elder brother, he left the regency of France; that of England he committed to the duke of Gloucester, his younger brother; and to the earl of Warwick he entrusted the important care of his son's person and education. He intreated these noblemen to continue to his infant offspring the fidelity and attachment which he himself had always experienced from them.

After this settlement of his temporal affairs, the dying monarch assiduously applied himself to his devotions, and declared his serious intention, when he had completely subdued France, to have marched against the infidels, and attempted the recovery of the Holy Land. Consoled by this pious resolution, with the calmest tranquillity, he expired in the tenth year of his reign, and the thirty-fourth of his age.

A.D. 1422.

The abilities of Henry the fifth were equally distinguished in the field and the cabinet; and while we admire the boldness of his enterprises, we cannot refuse our praise to the skilful manner in which they were conducted. His affability attached his friends to his service; his address and clemency vanquished his enemies. The unceasing attention which he paid to the administration of justice, and the severe discipline which he preserved in his armies, alleviated the calamities of the incessant hostilities by which France and England were agitated during his short and splendid reign. One frailty only seems to have alloyed the purity of his character; but it was the blemish of a great and noble mind;—the love of arms and military glory.

The exterior figure of this great prince, as well

well as his deportment, was engaging. His stature was somewhat above the middle size; his countenance beautiful; his limbs genteel and slender, but full of vigour; and he excelled in all warlike and manly exercises. He left by his queen, Catherine of France, only one son, not full nine months old; whose misfortunes, in the course of his life, surpassed all the glories and successes of his father.

Catherine of France, Henry's widow, married, soon after his death, a Welsh gentleman, sir Owen Tudor, said to be descended from the ancient princes of that country; she bore him two sons, Edmund and Jasper, of which the eldest was created earl of Richmond; the second earl of Pembroke. The family of Tudor, first raised to distinction by this alliance, mounted afterwards the throne of England.

The first commission of array which we meet with, was issued in this reign: the military part of the feudal system was entirely dissolved, and Henry, when he went to France, empowered certain commissioners to take in each county a review of the freemen able to bear arms, to divide them into companies, and to keep them in readiness for resisting the enemy.

The ordinary revenue of the crown at this time, consisted only of 55,714l. 10s. 10d.; the ordinary expences of the government amounted to 42,507l. 16s. 10d., so that the king had a surplus only of 13,206l. 14s. for the support of his household; for his wardrobe; the expence of ambassadors; and other incidental demands.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Reigns of Henry VI. *Edward* IV. *and Edward* V.

PARLIAMENT, which had been increasing in power during the reign of the princes of the house of Lancaster, without attending to the strict letter of the deceased monarch's recommendation, appointed the duke of Bedford *protector* or *guardian* of the kingdom, investing the duke of Gloucester with the same dignity, during the absence of his elder brother; and in order to limit the power of both these princes, they appointed a council, without whose advice and approbation no measure of importance could be determined. The person and education of the infant prince was committed to Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, his great uncle, who, as his family could never have any pretensions to the crown, might safely, they thought, be intrusted with that important charge.

The conquest of France was the first object of the new government; and, on a superficial view of the relative situation of both countries, every advantage seemed to be on the side of the English. Though Henry was an infant, the duke of Bedford was the most accomplished prince of his age, and the whole power of England was at his command. He was at the head of armies accustomed to victory; he was seconded by the most renowned generals of his time; and he was master of Paris, and almost all the northern provinces.

But Charles, notwithstanding his apparent inferiority,

feriority, possessed some advantages which served to turn the scale. He was the true and undoubted heir of the monarchy; and all Frenchmen who knew the interest, or desired the independence of their country, turned their eyes towards him as their sole resource. Though only in his twentieth year, he was of the most friendly and benign disposition, of easy and familiar manners, and of a just, though not of a very vigorous understanding. The love of pleasure often seduced him into indolence; but amidst all his irregularities, the goodness of his heart still shone forth; and by exerting at intervals his courage and activity, he proved that his remissness proceeded not from habitual errors or defects.

The resentment of the duke of Burgundy against Charles still continued; and the duke of Bedford, that he might corroborate national connections by private ties, concluded his own marriage with the princess of Burgundy, which had been stipulated at the treaty of Arras.

While the vigilance of the duke of Bedford was employed in gaining or confirming French alliances, he did not overlook the state of more remote countries. The duke of Albany, regent of Scotland, had expired; and his power had devolved on Murdac, his son, a princc of a weak understanding and indolent disposition. The ardour of the Scots to serve in France, where Charles treated them with great distinction, and where the regent's brother enjoyed the dignity of constable, broke out afresh; and new succours daily expatriated, and filled the armies of the French king. The duke of Bedford, therefore, persuaded the English council to form an alli-

ance

ance with James their prisoner; to free him from captivity, and to marry him to a daughter of the earl of Somerset, and cousin of the young king. Murdac, tired of his station, entered sincerely into the treaty; and for a ransom of forty thousand pounds, the king of Scotland was restored to the throne of his ancestors.

To these negotiations succeeded the operations of war. Charles, still desirous of employing his enemies in the provinces north of the Loire, contested every castle with politic obstinacy. He had been lately reinforced by numbers of the Scots; and John Stuart, constable of Scotland, with the lord of Estissac, had formed the siege of Crevant in Burgundy. The earls of Salisbury and Suffolk marched to its relief: the besiegers were routed, with the loss of above a thousand men; and the constable of Scotland, with the count of Ventadour, were taken prisoners.

Meanwhile, the duke of Bedford was engaged in the siege of Yvri in Normandy; and the governor, finding his resources exhausted, had agreed to surrender the town, unless relieved by a certain day. The king of France, hoping, by a successful enterprise, to restore the lustre of his arms, and to preserve Yvri, collected with diligence, an army of fourteen thousand men, of whom one half were Scots; and entrusted it to the valour and experience of the earl of Buchan, constable of France, who had already distinguished himself by the defeat of the duke of Clarence. That general, however, arrived too late to succour Yvri, which had already opened her gates; but he immediately invested Verneuil, and carried it without difficulty. He had

scarce

scarce time to secure this conquest before he was informed of the approach of the duke of Bedford. A council of war was immediately assembled to determine what conduct they should pursue. In vain did the most experienced French officers remonstrate on the imprudence of hazarding an army, the last resource of their king: the Scots rejected with contempt the indignity of retiring before the English; their opinions were espoused by the rash and presumptuous; and it was finally resolved to wait the arrival of the duke of Bedford.

The armies which encountered each other near Verneuil, were equally balanced in point of numbers. The earl of Buchan resolved to expect with patient firmness the charge of the enemy; but his measures were disconcerted by the impatience of the viscount of Narbonne. After a bloody conflict, the French being pressed on all sides, began gradually to retreat; and that retreat was soon changed into a tumultuous flight. Four thousand of their bravest soldiers, with the earls of Buchan and Douglas, the counts of Aumale, Ventadour, and Narbonne, perished in the field. The victors, however, purchased their triumph at the expence of sixteen hundred men; a loss so unusual, that the duke of Bedford forbad all rejoicings for his success.

The destruction of Charles now appeared inevitable; and from the danger which threatened to overwhelm him, he could only be saved by the dissensions of his enemies, which, fortunately for him, rose to a height that forbad him to despair.

Jaqueline, heiress of Hainault and Holland, had espoused John, duke of Brabant, cousin-german

german to the duke of Burgundy. The marriage had been dictated by policy; but the masculine spirit and brilliant capacity of the princess despised her ill-sorted consort, equally feeble in body and mind. Contempt was soon the parent of antipathy; and impatient of the dilatory measures and doubtful determination of the court of Rome, she escaped into England, and solicited the protection of the duke of Gloucester. The impetuous passions of that prince blinded him to the true interests of his country; the charms and the inheritance of the countess, presented themselves to his view; and without any farther ceremony, he entered into a marriage contract with Jaqueline, and immediately attempted to render himself master of her dominions.

The duke of Burgundy resented the injury offered to his kinsman, the duke of Brabant; and, at length, openly declared in his favour, and marched troops to his support. The quarrel, which at first was political, soon became personal; and the duke of Gloucester still persisting in pressing the war in the Low Countries, the protector, instead of improving the victory of Verneuil, was obliged to cross the seas to England, that he might try, by his counsels and authority, to check the mad career of his brother.

He found the English ministry distracted by jealousy; the bishop of Winchester, to whom the care of the king's education was entrusted, had continual disputes with his nephew the protector; and the duke of Bedford was obliged to employ the authority of parliament to reconcile them. The rivals swore to bury all quarrels in oblivion; and time also seemed to open expedients

dients for composing the difference with the duke of Burgundy.

The pope having declared the contract void, between Humphrey of Gloucester and Jaqueline, the duke, despairing of success, married another lady, who had lived some time with him as his mistress. The duke of Brabant died soon after; and his widow, before she could recover possession of her dominions, was obliged to declare the duke of Burgundy her heir, in case she should die without issue, and to promise never to marry without his consent. But the advantage which the latter prince reaped from the accommodation of these differences, did not prevent him in future from regarding the English with jealousy; and the satisfaction which the regent enjoyed from reconciling one ally, was soon alloyed by the unexpected desertion of the duke of Brittany and the earl of Richemont, who joined the standard of their legitimate sovereign, Charles the seventh.

A. D. 1426. During these political manœuvres, an English army of three thousand men, under the command of the earl of Warwick, had formed the siege of Montarges, and that place was reduced to the last extremity. Charles collected a body of sixteen hundred men, and entrusted them to a natural son of that duke of Orleans, who had been assassinated by the duke of Burgundy. This general, who was afterwards so famous under the titles of Bastard of Orleans, and Count of Dunois, attacked the enemy's entrenchments, and compelled the English to abandon the siege with disgrace.

The duke of Bedford, indignant at the tergiversation

giversation of the duke of Brittany, on his arrival in France, had secretly assembled a considerable army, to chastise the desertion of that prince, and suddenly invading the province, unprepared for resistance, compelled its sovereign to renounce his alliance with France; and to yield homage to Henry for his duchy. Successful in his enterprise, he entered on another equally important, and determined to invest the city of Orleans. The army destined for this siege, consisting of ten thousand men, he entrusted to the veteran abilities of the earl of Salisbury; while, on the other hand, Charles reinforcing the garrison, and replenishing the magazines, appointed as governor the lord of Gaucour, a brave and experienced officer

A. D. 1428.

Soon after the siege commenced, the earl of Salisbury was killed by a cannon ball, in a spirited and successful attempt on the fortifications. The command, on his death, devolved on the earl of Suffolk. The army was reinforced by large bodies of the French and Burgundians; and Orleans under his directions was completely invested. The inclemency of the season, and the rigour of the winter, could not overcome the perseverance of the besiegers; a chain of forts was arduously constructed; yet the vacant spaces still allowed succours to be introduced; and the garrison, before the return of spring, was swelled by frequent supplies from twelve hundred to three thousand men; while their hopes were raised, and their efforts encouraged by the presence and example of the Bastard of Orleans.

In order to distress the besiegers, the French had ravaged and exhausted the adjacent country; and the English were compelled to draw

their subsistence from a considerable distance. A convoy of provisions was entrusted to the conduct of sir John Falstoffe, with a detachment of two thousand five hundred men. The king of France, determined to strain every nerve for the preservation of the city, collecting a body of troops, in number about four thousand, appointed the count of Clermont to command them. On the approach of the French, Falstoffe drew up his men behind the waggons, and calmly received the fury of their charge. The French were broken by their own impetuosity; and five hundred perished on the field.

Frustrated in his attempt to relieve Orleans by arms, the king of France now endeavoured to preserve it by policy. The duke of Orleans, still a prisoner in England, had obtained from the duke of Gloucester, and his council, the promise of a neutrality in his demesnes; and that they should be sequestered during the war into the hands of the duke of Burgundy: but this expedient was firmly rejected by the duke of Bedford; and to the importunities of the duke of Burgundy he coolly replied, "he was not in a humour to beat the bushes, whilst others ran away with the game." Disgusted at this refusal, Burgundy separated his forces from those of the English; but the latter still pressed the siege with increase of ardour; when Orleans was preserved by an occurrence so singular as almost to stagger belief, were it not confirmed by the united testimony of contemporary historians.

Charles, almost reduced to despair, had already began to meditate a retreat into Dauphiné. From this intention, however, he was diverted by the intreaties of his queen, Mary of Anjou, a princess of prudence and spirit; and by the

more

more persuasive remonstrances of his beautiful mistress, the celebrated Agnes de Sorele.

Undetermined how to act, and in hourly expectation of receiving intelligence that Orleans had surrendered, his attention was arrested by the appearance of a village girl, destined to prop his falling fortunes, and restore him to the dominions of his ancestors. In the village of Domremi, near Vaucoleurs, on the borders of Lorraine, at a small inn, resided a female servant called Joan D'Arc; who having been accustomed to ride the horses of her master's guests to water, acquired a degree of boldness above her sex, and listened with pleasure to the tale of martial achievements, which were then the general topics of conversation.

Her imagination being gradually heated with such recitals, she was soon inflamed with the desire of avenging on the English the misery of France. Accordingly, she procured admission to Badricourt, the governor of Vaucoleurs; and declared to him, that she had been exhorted by frequent visions and distant voices, to achieve the deliverance of her country. The governor, either equally credulous himself, or sufficiently penetrating to foresee the effect such an enthusiast might have on the mind of the vulgar, granted her an escort to the French court, which at that time resided at Chinon, in Touraine.

On her arrival, she is said to have distinguished Charles from his courtiers, though divested of every ensign of royalty; to have revealed a secret to him, unknown to all the world beside himself; and to have demanded and described by particular marks, a sword which she had never seen, and which she required as the

 instrument

instrument of her future victories; asserting, that she was commissioned to raise the siege of Orleans, and conduct him to Rheims; to be there crowned and anointed. Charles and his ministers pretended to examine her pretensions with scrupulous exactness. They affected at length to be convinced of the sincerity of her declarations, and of her supernatural powers; and their opinion was solemnly and publicly countenanced by an assembly of doctors and theologians, and by the parliament of France, then residing at Poictiers.

In order to avail himself of the enthusiasm of the moment, Charles sent Joan to Blois, where a convoy was already provided for the relief of Orleans, and an army of ten thousand men was collected to escort it. The holy maid, displaying in her hand a consecrated banner, marched at the head of her troops. She had already declared her intention of entering the city by the road from the side of Beausse; but the Bastard of Orleans, count of Dunois, prevailed on her to approach the town on the opposite side of the Loire, where he knew the besiegers were weakest.

The English had at first heard with contempt the preparations of Charles, and derided the heavenly commission of Joan; but the minds of the common soldiers were insensibly impressed with holy dread, and they awaited the event with anxious fear. The earl of Suffolk, apprised of the disposition of his troops, vainly flattered himself that time would dispel their apprehensions, and banish the illusion. He determined to remain quietly within his intrenchments, while the convoy entered the city with Joan, and the French army returned to Blois without interruption.

ruption. A second convoy soon after entered the city, on the side of Beausse, and was also suffered by the besiegers to pass without resistance. The French assumed new spirits; while the English, formerly elated with victory, and impatient for action, beheld the enterprises of their enemies in silent astonishment and religious awe.

The enthusiasm of Joan, however, could not be restrained within the walls of Orleans: she exhorted the garrison to listen to her voice, and imitate her example. In a successful sally, the entrenchments of the besiegers were stormed. A second sally swept away the forts on the opposite side of the Loire; and a wound from an arrow, served rather to inflame than damp the courage of the intrepid heroine. The count of Dunois consented to seize the moment of returning fortune; the English were successively chased from their posts, with the loss of above six thousand men; and the French, animated by this first essay of the holy maid, prepared to improve their advantage, and avail themselves of the superstitious terrors of their adversaries.

With six thousand select troops, the earl of Suffolk had retreated to Jergeau: he was attacked there by the French, commanded by Joan; the place was obstinately defended; but the English were at length overpowered, and Suffolk was obliged to yield himself prisoner. The remainder of the English army under the conduct of Falstoffe, Scales, and Talbot, were pressed by the constable Richemont; they were overtaken at the village of Patay; and, oppressed by their fears, they never stood the charge of the enemy. Falstoffe himself, who had so lately triumphed, was the first to fly: two thousand

of the English were slaughtered; and both Scales and Talbot were made prisoners.

The maid of Orleans, who had fulfilled part of her promise, was now determined to conduct the king to receive the crown at Rheims. The city itself lay distant from any place possessed by Charles; it was in the hands of the English; and the whole road which led to it was occupied by their garrisons. Yet Joan insisted on the execution of her mission; the king himself shook off his general indolence, and resolved to follow the exhortations of his warlike prophetess; the nobility of France crowded to the standard of their youthful sovereign, who began his march at the head of twelve thousand men; and passing without interruption through an enemy's country, received in his progress the submission of Troyes; was instantly admitted into Rheims; and in that city was solemnly inaugurated. The claim of Charles from his coronation at Rheims, received new lustre; and many towns in the neighbourhood, disputed the honour of first acknowledging the authority of their lawful sovereign.

A. D. 1430. The character of Bedford was never displayed to more advantage than amidst these storms of adversity. He reinforced the garrisons of the different towns, replenished their magazines, and overawed the inclinations of the inhabitants, ripe for revolt. The Parisians were retained in obedience by alternate caresses and menaces; and his arts soothed the angry passions of the duke of Burgundy, and deferred the fatal hour of his final defection. Harassed by the vigilance of the regent, the army of France, which had been composed chiefly of volunteers, at length disbanded;

Charles,

Charles, after having possessed himself of Lava, Lagni, and St. Denys, retired to Bourges; and Bedford invited Henry the sixth to Paris, and celebrating the ceremony of his coronation in that capital, exacted an oath of allegiance from such as still acknowledged the authority of the English.

Whatever lustre the coronation of the infant king might reflect on his cause, the regent expected to derive more solid advantage from an accident which soon after took place. Joan d'Arc had declared, that with the inauguration of Charles at Rheims, her mission expired; and that it was her wish, after having fulfilled her promises, to retire to her former condition. The count of Dunois had exhorted her to persevere, till the English were finally expelled. Overcome by his importunities, she had thrown herself into Compeigne, which at that time was besieged by the duke of Burgundy, assisted by the earls of Arundel and Suffolk. In a sally, she was deserted by her friends, probably out of envy, and being surrounded by her enemies, after a gallant resistance, was taken prisoner.

The duke of Bedford purchased from John of Luxemburg, into whose hands she had fallen, his important captive, and commenced a prosecution against her, which, whether undertaken from policy or revenge, stains with barbarity this accomplished character. She was accused of sorcery, impiety, idolatry, and magic. She repelled the ridiculous charges with heroic firmness; but she was already prejudged; her revelations were declared to be the inventions of the devil to delude the people; and she was sentenced to be burnt in the market-place of Rouen.

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The inhuman sentence was soon after executed; and the unhappy victim was delivered alive to the flames.

But the inhumanity of the English contributed not to advance their interests: the illusion which had so long oppressed them with terror was indeed dispelled, but the tide of fortune still continued to flow rapidly against them; the French triumphed in repeated encounters; and their success was ensured by a rupture between the dukes of Burgundy and Bedford. The bands of friendship had been loosened by the death of the duchess of the latter; and the former complained, that the memory of his sister was insulted by the hasty marriage of the regent with Jaqueline of Luxemburg. All advances toward a reconciliation were disdained by two princes equally tenacious of their dignity; and Charles availed himself of the discontent of the duke of Burgundy to negotiate the celebrated treaty, since known by the name of the treaty of Arras.

A. D. 1435. Soon after this transaction, the duke of Bedford expired, a prince of many virtues, and whose memory is chiefly tarnished by the execution of the maid of Orleans. After his death, the court of Henry was distracted by the rival parties of the duke of Gloucester and the cardinal of Winchester; and it was seven months before the duke of York, son to the earl of Cambridge, who had been executed in the last reign, was appointed to the command in France. On his arrival, the new governor found the capital already lost; the Parisians, attached to the house of Burgundy, imitated the example of that duke; they opened their gates to the count of Richemont, and pro-

claimed

claimed Charles the seventh. Lord Willoughby, with an English garrison of fifteen hundred men, maintained himself for some time in the Bastile; but his valour and skill only served to procure him a capitulation, by which he was allowed with his troops a free passage to Rouen.

For five years the duke of York struggled against the difficulties of his situation; and being assisted by the valour of lord Talbot, afterwards created earl of Shrewsbury, he performed many brilliant, but indecisive actions. At last both parties, weary of hostilities, seemed desirous of peace, and they set on foot negotiations for that purpose. But the proposals of France, and the demands of England, were still so wide of each other, that all hope of accommodation immediately vanished. The English ambassadors demanded full and entire restitution of all the provinces which had once been annexed to England, together with the final cession of Calais and its district: the French offered only part of Guienne, part of Normandy, and Calais, loaded with the usual burthen of homage. It appeared in vain to continue the negotiation, while there was so little prospect of agreement. The English were still too haughty to stoop from the vast hopes which they had formerly entertained; and the French had gained too much, not to hope the acquisition of more.

The captivity of five princes of the blood, taken prisoners in the battle of Agincourt, was a considerable advantage which England long enjoyed over its enemy; but this superiority was now entirely lost. Some of these princes had died; some had been ransomed; and the duke of Orleans, the most powerful among them, was

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the last that remained in the hands of the English. He offered the sum of fifty-four thousand nobles for his liberty; and when this proposal was laid before the council of England, the party of the duke of Gloucester opposed it, and that of the cardinal of Winchester, supported it with zeal. The party of the latter, as usual, prevailed; and the duke of Orleans was released, after a melancholy captivity of twenty-five years.

A. D. 1440. The sentiments of the cardinal soon after prevailed in another more essential point. That prelate had always encouraged every proposal of accommodation with France, and had represented the utter impossibility of pushing farther the conquests in that kingdom; but the duke of Gloucester, high-spirited and haughty, and educated in the lofty pretensions which the first successes of his two brothers had rendered familiar to him, could not endure these humble counsels. The influence of his rival, however, turned the scale, and the earl of Suffolk, who adhered to the cardinal's party, was dispatched to Tours to negotiate with the French ministers. As it was found impossible to adjust the terms of a lasting peace, he concluded a truce for twenty-two months; and proceeded to the execution of another business, which seems to have been rather implied than expressed [illegible] commission.

As Henry advanced in years, his character developed itself. He was found to be of the most harmless, simple manners, but of the most slender capacity. Hence it was easy to foresee that his reign would prove a perpetual minority. As he had now reached the twenty-third year of his

his age, it was natural, however, to think of choosing him a queen. The duke of Gloucester proposed a daughter of the count of Armagnac; but the cardinal and his friends cast their eyes on Margaret of Anjou, daughter of Regnier, titular king of Sicily, Naples, and Jerusalem; a princess accomplished both in person and mind; of a masculine spirit and enterprising temper, and which had even become auspicious in the privacy of her father's family. The earl of Suffolk, in concert with his associates of the English council, made proposals of marriage to Margaret, which were accepted. But this nobleman, besides pre-occupying the princess's favour, by being the chief means of her advancement, endeavoured farther to ingratiate himself with her and her family, by very extraordinary concessions. Though Margaret brought no dowry with her, he ventured, of himself, without any direct authority from the council, but probably with the approbation of the cardinal and the ruling members, to engage, by a secret article, that the province of Maine, which was at that time in the hands of the English, should be ceded to Charles of Anjou, her uncle, who was prime minister, and favourite of the French king, and who had already received from his master the grant of that province as his appanage.

The treaty of marriage was ratified in England: Suffolk obtained first, the title of marquis, then that of duke; and even received the thanks of parliament for his services in concluding it. The princess fell immediately into close connection with the cardinal and his party, who, fortified by her powerful patronage, A. D. 1443.

resolved

resolved on the final ruin of the duke of Gloucester.

This generous prince, ill suited for court intrigues, but possessing, in a high degree, the favour of the public, had already received from his rivals a cruel mortification, which it was impossible a person of his spirit and humanity could ever forgive. His duchess, the daughter of Reginald lord Cobham, had been accused of the crime of witchcraft, under the pretence, that there was found in her possession a waxen figure of the king, which she and her associates, sir Roger Bolingbroke a priest, and one Margery Jordan of Eye, melted in a magical manner before a slow fire, with an intention of making Henry's force and vigour waste away, by like insensible degrees. The accusation was well calculated to affect the weak and credulous mind of the king, and to gain belief in a superstitious age; and the duchess was brought to trial with her confederates. A charge of this ridiculous nature, seems always to exempt the accusers from observing the rules of common sense in their evidence: the prisoners were pronounced guilty; the duchess was condemned to do public penance, and to suffer perpetual imprisonment; while her reputed associates in the ideal crime, were put to death.

Having proceeded to such unpardonable lengths, the cardinal and his party were sensible it was necessary to destroy a man whom they had already so deeply injured. In order to effect this purpose, a parliament was summoned to meet, not at London, which was well affected to the duke, but at St. Edmundsbury. As soon as Gloucester appeared, he was accused of trea-

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son, and thrown into prison: he was soon after found dead in his bed; and though it was pretended that his death was natural, and his body bore no marks of outward violence, no one doubted but he had fallen a victim to the vengeance of his enemies.

This prince is said to have received a better education than was usual in his age;* and to have been more free from credulity than his contemporaries; of which the following instance is given by sir Thomas More. There was a man who pretended, though born blind, that he had recovered his sight by touching the shrine of St. Alban. The duke, happening soon after to pass that way, questioned this person, and seeming to doubt his story, asked him the colours of several cloaks, worn by persons of his retinue. The man told them very readily. "You are a knave," cried the prince; "had you been born blind you could not so soon have learned to distinguish colours:" and immediately ordered him to be set in the stocks as an impostor.

The cardinal of Winchester died six weeks after his nephew, whose murder was universally ascribed to him as well as to the duke of Suffolk, and which, it is said, gave him more remorse in his last moments, than could naturally be expected from a man hardened, during the course of a long life, in falsehood and in politics. What share the queen had in this guilt, is uncertain; her usual activity and spirit made the public conclude, with some reason, that the

* He was likewise the patron of learned men, and laid the foundation of one of the first public libraries in England, at Oxford.

 duke's

duke's enemies durst not have ventured on such a deed without her privity. But there happened, soon after, an event, of which she and her favourite, the duke of Suffolk, bore incontestibly the whole odium.

The article of the marriage treaty, by which Maine was to be ceded to Charles of Anjou, had hitherto been kept secret; but as the court of France insisted on the performance of it, orders were dispatched to Surienne, governor of Mans, to surrender that place. The governor, questioning probably the legality of the order, refused to comply until he had sustained a siege from the count of Dunois. When reduced to capitulate, he retired with his garrison towards Normandy; but the duke of Somerset, to whom the provinces of France, still occupied by the English, were entrusted, refused to admit him. This military adventurer immediately directing his march towards Brittany, exacted contributions from that province: the duke of Brittany complained of this violence to the king of France, his liege lord; and Charles remonstrated with the duke of Somerset, who replied, that the injury was done without his privity, and that he had no authority over Surienne and his companions. Though this answer was plausible, Charles never would admit of the apology. He still insisted that these plunderers should be recalled, and that reparation should be made to the duke of Brittany for all the damages which he had sustained; and, in order to render an accommodation absolutely impracticable, he estimated the loss at no less a sum than one million six hundred thousand crowns.

Sensible of the superiority which the present state

state of his affairs gave him over England, he was determined to take advantage of it; and, accordingly, four formidable armies entered Normandy at once; the first, commanded by the king of France himself; the second, by the duke of Brittany; the third, by the duke of Alençon; and the fourth, by the count of Dunois. The inhabitants of Normandy opened their gates as soon as the French appeared before them. The duke of Somerset, so far from having an army which could take the field and relieve these places, was not able to supply them with the necessary garrisons and provisions. He retired, therefore, with the few troops of which he was master, into Rouen; and thought it sufficient, for the present, if he could save that capital from the general fate of the province. The king of France, at the head of a formidable army, fifty thousand strong, presented himself before the gates: the dangerous example of revolt had affected the inhabitants; and they called aloud for a capitulation. Somerset, unable to resist, at once, both the enemies within and from without, purchased a retreat to Harfleur by the payment of fifty-six thousand crowns, by engaging to surrender Arques, Tancarville, Caudebec, Honfleur, and other places in the higher Normandy, and by delivering hostages for the performance of articles. The governor of Honfleur refused to obey his orders; upon which the earl of Shrewsbury, who was one of the hostages, was detained prisoner; and the English were thus deprived of the only general capable of recovering them from their present distressed situation. Harfleur made a resolute defence under sir Thomas

A. D. 1448.

Curson the governor; but was finally obliged to open its gates to Dunois.

A succour of four thousand men at last arrived from England, and landed at Cherbourg; but these were soon after put to rout at Fourmigni, by the count of Clermont. This battle, or rather skirmish, was the only action fought by the English for the defence of their dominions in France, which they had purchased at such an expence of blood and treasure. Somerset, shut up in Caen, without any prospect of relief, found it necessary to capitulate: Falaise opened its gates, on condition that the earl of Shrewsbury should be restored to liberty: and Cherbourg, the last place in Normandy which remained in the hands of the English, being delivered up, the conquest of that important province was speedily finished by Charles.

A like rapid success attended the French arms in Guienne; no resistance was made in the field; and the English were expelled in a few months, from a province which they had held for near three centuries. One feeble effort alone was made to recover it; and though no peace was concluded, the war seemed to be at an end; and from the continent the attention of the English was recalled to their domestic concerns.

A. D. 1450. The palpable weakness of Henry the sixth had encouraged a pretender to the crown, and the English were doomed to pay, though late, the penalty of their turbulence under Richard the second, and of their levity in violating, without any necessity, the lineal succession of their monarchs. The male line of the house of Mortimer was extinct; but Anne, the sister of the last earl of Marche, having espoused

poused the earl of Cambridge, beheaded in the reign of Henry V. had transmitted her latent, but not yet forgotten, claim to her son, Richard duke of York. This prince, thus descended by his mother from Philippa, only daughter of the duke of Clarence, second son of Edward III. evidently stood in the order of succession before the king, who derived his descent from the duke of Lancaster, third son of that monarch; and that claim could not, in many respects, have fallen into more dangerous hands than those of the duke of York. Richard was a man of valour and abilities, of prudence and mildness: he had enjoyed an opportunity of displaying these virtues in his government of France; and though recalled from that command by the intrigues and superior interest of the duke of Somerset, he had been very successful in Ireland; and had even been able to attach to his person and family the whole nation, whom he was sent to subdue. In the right of his father, he bore the rank of first prince of the blood; and by this station he gave a lustre to his title derived from the family of Mortimer, which, however, had been eclipsed by the royal descent of the house of Lancaster. He possessed an immense fortune from the union of so many successions, those of Cambridge and York on the one hand, with those of Mortimer on the other: which last inheritance had before been augmented by an union of the estates of Clarence and Ulster with the patrimonial possessions of the family of Marche. The alliances too of Richard, by his marrying the daughter of Ralph Nevil, earl of Westmoreland, had widely extended his interest among the nobility, and had procured him many connexions in that formidable order.

Among the rest, he was nearly allied to the earl of Warwick, commonly known, from the subsequent events, by the appellation of the King-maker. This nobleman had distinguished himself by his gallantry in the field, the hospitality of his table, by the magnificence, and still more by the generosity of his expence, and by the spirited and bold manner which attended him in all his actions. The undesigned frankness and openness of his character rendered his conquest over men's affections the more certain. No less than thirty thousand persons are said to have daily lived at his expence; and his munificence and hospitality, with the multitude of his retainers, distinguish him as the last of those mighty barons who formerly overawed the crown.

But though the duke of York had numerous and powerful partisans, his chief dependence was on the discontents which universally prevailed. The people repined at the loss of the provinces in France; and this made them consider queen Margaret as a French-woman, and a latent enemy to the kingdom. But the most fatal blow given to the popularity of the house of Lancaster, was the assassination of the virtuous duke of Gloucester: by this crime the reigning family suffered a double prejudice; it was deprived of its firmest support, and it was loaded with the infamy of that barbarous murder.

The earl of Suffolk was known to have had an active hand in the crime, and the murmurs which rose against him as a minister, and favourite of the queen, were thereby raised to a dangerous height. The necessities of the crown had impelled him to many arbitrary measures; and

and the commons, provoked by his imprudence, and challenging an inquiry into his conduct, sent up an impeachment against him to the house of peers. As Suffolk seems to have been a bad man as well as a bad minister, it is probable many of the alleged charges would be proved against him, though he made a resolute defence. The court, alarmed at the prosecution, fell on an expedient to save him from present ruin. The king summoned all the lords, spiritual and temporal, to his apartment: the prisoner was produced before them, and asked what he could say in his own defence? He denied the charge; but submitted to the king's mercy: Henry expressed himself not satisfied with regard to the first impeachment for treason; but in consideration of the second, for misdemeanors, he declared, that, by virtue of Suffolk's own submission, not by any judicial authority, he banished him the kingdom during five years. The lords remained silent; but as soon as they returned to their own house, they entered a protest, that his sentence should nowise infringe their privileges; and that, if Suffolk had insisted upon his right, and had not voluntarily submitted to the king's commands, he was entitled to a trial by his peers.

It required little penetration to guess, that these irregular proceedings were meant to favour Suffolk, and that, as he still possessed the queen's confidence, he would, on the first favourable opportunity, be restored to his country, and be reinstated in his former power and credit. A captain of a vessel was therefore employed by his enemies to intercept him in his passage to France: he was seized near Dover; his head struck off on the side of a long-boat,

and

and his body thrown into the sea. Such was the imbecility of the government, that no inquiry was made after the actors and accomplices in this atrocious deed of violence.

The duke of Somerset now rose as a minister and favourite; and as he was the person under whom the French provinces had been lost, the public, who always judge by the event, soon made him equally the object of their animosity and hatred with his predecessor. The duke of York was absent in Ireland during all these transactions; and, however much he might be suspected of influencing late events, the jealousy of the court was not yet awakened against this popular prince.

The humours of the people, however, once set afloat by the parliamentary impeachment, and by the fall of so great a favourite as Suffolk, broke out in various commotions, which were soon suppressed; but an insurrection in Kent, was attended with consequences, that deserve to be regarded. One John Cade, a native of Ireland, of low condition, who had been obliged to fly into France for his crimes, on his return to England, observing the discontents of the people, availed himself of them, to execute a plan at once original and daring. He took the name of John Mortimer; intending, as is supposed, to pass himself for a son of sir John Mortimer, who had been sentenced to death by parliament, and executed, in the beginning of this reign, without any trial or evidence, merely upon an indictment of high treason preferred against him.

On the first mention of that popular name, the common people of Kent, to the number of twenty

twenty thousand, flocked to Cade's standard, and he inflamed their zeal by publishing complaints against the numerous abuses in government, and demanding a redress of grievances. The court, not yet fully sensible of the danger, sent a small force against the insurgents, under the command of sir Humphrey Stafford, who was defeated and slain in an action near Sevenoak; and Cade, advancing with his followers towards London, encamped on Blackheath. Though elated by his victory, he still maintained the appearance of moderation; and transmitting to the court a plausible list of grievances, promised, that when these should be redressed, and lord Say the treasurer, and Cromer sheriff of Kent, should be punished for their malversations, he would immediately lay down his arms. The council, perceiving the public reluctance to fight against men so reasonable in their pretensions, carried the king, for present safety, to Kenilworth; and the city immediately opened its gates to Cade, who maintained, during some time, great order and discipline among his followers. But being obliged, in order to gratify their malevolence against Say and Cromer, to put these men to death without a legal trial, he found that, after the commission of this crime, he was no longer able to control their riotous disposition, and that his authority was despised. Proceeding to acts of plunder and violence, the citizens, who had hitherto been passive, now took the alarm; and, being seconded by a detachment of soldiers, sent them by lord Scales, governor of the tower, they repulsed the rebels with great slaughter. The Kentishmen were so discouraged by the blow, that

that upon receiving a general pardon from the primate, then chancellor, they retreated towards Rochester, and there dispersed. The pardon, however, was soon after annulled, as extorted by violence: a price was set on Cade's head, who was killed by one Iden, a gentleman of Sussex; and many of his followers were brought to condign punishment.

A strong suspicion existed among the courtiers that the duke of York had secretly instigated Cade to this attempt, to sound the dispositions of the people towards his title and family; and fearing he meant to return from Ireland with an armed force, they issued orders debarring him entrance into England. The duke refuted his enemies, by landing with only his ordinary retinue; but their precautions convinced him of his own danger, from their jealousy. He now saw the impossibility of remaining a quiet subject, and the necessity of proceeding forwards in support of his claim. His partisans therefore were instructed to maintain his right by succession, and by the established constitution of the kingdom; and the arguments adduced by his adherents and those of the reigning family, soon divided and distracted the people. The earl of Courtney and the duke of Norfolk espoused the part of the duke of York; but the earl of Northumberland adhered to the present government; and even the earl of Westmoreland, though the head of the Nevil family, was prevailed on to support the cause of Henry.

The hostile spirit, however, which appeared in a parliament, assembled soon after the arrival of the duke of York from Ireland, increased the expectations of his partisans. The commons

ventured

ventured to present a petition against the duke of Somerset, lord Dudley, and several others of inferior rank, praying the king to remove them for ever from his person and councils. This was a violent attack, and supported but by few precedents; yet the king durst not openly oppose it, and satisfied himself with a temporizing reply, which only the more exposed his weakness.

The duke of York, trusting to these symptoms of disaffection, raised an army of ten thousand men, with which he marched towards London, demanding a reformation of the government, and the removal of the duke of Somerset from all power and authority. He unexpectedly found the gates of the city shut against him; and, on his retreating into Kent, he was followed by the king, at the head of a superior army. A parley ensued: the removal of Somerset, and of his submitting to a trial in parliament, were still insisted on; and the court pretending to comply with the demand, that nobleman was put in arrest. The duke of York was then persuaded to pay his respects to the king in his tent; and, on repeating his charge against the duke of Somerset, he was surprised to see that minister step from behind the curtain, and offer to maintain his innocence. Richard now found that he had been betrayed; and that it was become necessary, for his own safety, to lower his pretensions. No violence, however, was attempted against him: the nation was not in a disposition to bear the destruction of so popular a prince; and his son, who was not in the power of the court, might still be able to revenge his death on all his enemies. He was therefore dismissed;

missed; and retired to his seat of Wigmore, on the borders of Wales.

While the duke of York lived in this retreat, there happened an incident, which, by increasing the public discontents, proved favourable to his pretensions, had he been ardent in urging them. Several Gascon lords, attached to the English government, and disgusted at the new dominion of the French, came to London, and offered to return to their allegiance under Henry. The earl of Shrewsbury, with a body of eight thousand men, was sent over to support them. Bourdeaux opened its gates to him: he made himself master of Fronsac, Castillon, and some other places; but, as Charles hastened to resist this dangerous invasion, the fortunes of the English were soon reversed. Shrewsbury, a venerable warrior, above fourscore years of age, fell in battle: his conquests were lost; and all hopes of recovering the province of Gascony were for ever extinguished.

Though it has ever been the curse of England to be encumbered with continental possessions, the people expressed great discontent on the occasion, and threw all the blame on the ministry. While they were in this disposition, the queen's delivery of a son, who received the name of Edward, increased their dissatisfaction, as it removed all hopes of the peaceable succession of the duke of York, who was, otherwise, both in the right of his father, and by the laws enacted since the accession of the house of Lancaster, next heir to the crown. The duke himself, however, was incapable of violent counsels; and even when no visible obstacle lay between him and the throne, he was prevented by his own scruples

scruples from mounting it. Henry, at all times unfit to exercise the government, about this period fell into a distemper, which so far increased his natural imbecility, as to render him incapable of supporting even the appearance of royalty. The queen and the council, destitute of this support, and finding themselves unable to resist the York party, were obliged to yield to the torrent. They sent Somerset to the tower; and appointed Richard lieutenant of the kingdom, with powers to open and hold a session of parliament. That assembly also, taking into consideration the state of the kingdom, created him protector during pleasure. Yet the duke, instead of pushing them to make farther concessions, appeared somewhat timid and irresolute, even in receiving the power which was tendered to him. He desired that it might be recorded in parliament, that this authority was conferred on him from their own free motion, without any application on his own part; and expressed his hopes that they would assist him in the exercise of it. This moderation of Richard was certainly very unusual though very amiable; yet was it attended with bad consequences in the present juncture, and, by giving time to the animosities of faction to rise and ferment, it proved the source of all those furious wars and commotions which ensued.

The enemies of the duke of York soon found it in their power to make advantage of his excessive caution. Henry being so far recovered from his distemper as to be able in appearance to exercise the royal power, was moved to resume his authority, to annul the protectorship of the duke, to release Somerset from the tower, and to

to commit the administration into the hands of that nobleman. Richard, sensible of the dangers to which he was exposed, levied an army; but still without advancing any pretensions to the crown. He complained only of the king's ministers, and demanded a reformation of the government. A battle, however, was fought at St. Alban's, in which the Yorkists, without suffering any material loss, slew about five thousand of their enemies; among whom were the duke of Somerset, the earl of Northumberland, the earl of Stafford, eldest son of the duke of Buckingham, lord Clifford, and many other persons of distinction. The king himself fell into the hands of the duke of York, who treated him with great respect and tenderness; and he was only obliged, which he regarded indeed as no hardship, to commit the whole authority of the crown into the hands of his rival. This was the first blood spilt in that fatal quarrel between the houses of York and Lancaster, which lasted during thirty years, and which is computed to have cost the lives of eighty princes of the blood, and almost entirely annihilated the ancient nobility of England.

After all, it was not difficult to wrest power from hands so little tenacious as those of the duke of York: Margaret availing herself of that prince's absence, and of rather a better state of health in Henry, produced the latter before the house of lords, where he declared his intention of resuming the government. To this measure the house of lords assented, though they had recently acknowledged Richard as protector; and the king was reinstated in his authority without any open opposition.

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An outward reconciliation was procured by the means of the archbishop of Canterbury, between the rival factions; but it was impossible to restore trust and confidence. One of the king's retinue, having insulted a retainer of the earl of Warwick's, their companions on both sides took part in the quarrel: a fierce combat ensued; and the earl, apprehending his life to be aimed at, fled to Calais; the government of which gave him the command of the only regular military force maintained by England; and both parties, in every county, made preparations for deciding the contest by force of arms.

The earl of Salisbury, marching to join the duke of York, was overtaken at Blore-heath, on the borders of Staffordshire, by lord Audley, who commanded much superior forces. A small rivulet with steep banks ran between the armies. Salisbury here supplied his defect in numbers by stratagem. He feigned a retreat, and allured Audley to follow him with precipitation: but when the van of the royal army had passed the brook, Salisbury suddenly turned upon them; and partly by the surprise, partly by the division of the enemies' forces, put them to the route; and reached the general rendezvous of the Yorkists at Ludlow.

To the same place, the earl of Warwick brought over a choice body of veterans from Calais, on whom it was thought the fortune of the war would much depend; but this reinforcement occasioned, in the issue, the immediate ruin of the duke of York's party. When the royal army approached, and a general action was every hour expected, sir Andrew Trollop, who commanded the veterans, deserted to the

king in the night-time; and the Yorkists were so dismayed at this instance of treachery, which made every man suspicious of his fellow, that they separated next day, without striking a stroke. The duke fled to Ireland; and the earl of Warwick, attended by many of the other leaders, escaped to Calais, where his great popularity among all orders of men soon drew to him partisans; while the friends of the house of York, in England, kept themselves every where in readiness, to rise on the first summons.

Warwick having met with some previous successes at sea, landed in Kent, with the earl of Salisbury, and the earl of Marche, eldest son of the duke of York; and being met by the primate and other persons of distinction, he marched, amidst the acclamations of the people, to London. The city immediately opened its gates to him; and his troops increasing on every day's march, he soon found himself in a condition to face the royal army, which hastened from Coventry to attack him. A battle was fought at Northampton; and was soon decided against the royalists by the infidelity of lord Grey of Ruthin, who, commanding Henry's van, deserted to the enemy during the heat of action, and spread a consternation through the troops. The duke of Buckingham, the earl of Shrewsbury, the lords Beaumont and Egremont, and sir William Lucie, with many other persons of quality, were killed in the action or pursuit: the common people were spared by orders of the earls of Warwick and Marche. Henry himself was again taken prisoner; and as the innocence and simplicity of his manners, together with his misfortunes, rendered him an interesting object, he was treated with abundant respect.

A parliament being summoned in the king's name at Westminster, the duke soon after appeared there from Ireland; and stating to the house of peers his own claim, exhorted them to do justice to the lineal succession. The lords remained for some time in suspense; but at length declared in favour of the claim of the duke of York.

It was decreed, however, that Henry should continue to possess the dignity during the remainder of his life; that the administration of the country should in the mean while remain with Richard; and that he should be acknowledged the true and lawful heir of the monarchy. In this decision the duke acquiesced; and Henry, had he even been at liberty, would not probably have objected to it.

The high spirited Margaret, however, spurned at the compact, and resolved to assert in arms the rights of her family. After the battle of Northampton, she had fled to the north, where her affability, insinuation, and address, among the northern barons, raised her an army twenty thousand strong, with a celerity which was neither expected by her friends, nor apprehended by her enemies.

The duke of York, informed of her appearance in the north, hastened thither with a body of five thousand men, but on his arrival at Wakefield, finding himself so much outnumbered by the enemy, he threw himself into Sandal castle; and was advised by the earl of Salisbury, and other prudent counsellors, to remain in that fortress, till his son, the earl of Marche, who was levying forces on the borders of Wales, could advance to his assistance. The duke, however,

who possessed personal bravery in an eminent degree, thought that he should be for ever disgraced, if by taking shelter behind walls, he should for a moment resign the victory to a woman. He therefore descended into the plain, and offered battle to the enemy, which was instantly accepted. The great inequality of numbers was sufficient alone to decide the victory; but the queen, by sending a detachment, who fell on the rear of the duke's army, rendered her advantage still more certain and undisputed. The duke himself was killed in the action; and his head was, by Margaret's orders, fixed on the gates of York, with a paper crown, in derision of his pretended title. His son, the earl of Rutland, a very promising youth of seventeen, was murdered in cool blood, by lord Clifford, in revenge for the loss of his father, at the battle of St. Albans. The earl of Salisbury was wounded and taken prisoner, and immediately beheaded, with several other persons of distinction, by martial law, at Pomfret. There fell near three thousand Yorkists in this battle: the duke himself was greatly and justly lamented by his own party. He perished in the fiftieth year of his age, and left three sons, Edward, George, and Richard, with three daughters, Anne, Elizabeth, and Margaret.

The queen, after this important victory, divided her army. She sent the smaller division, under Jasper Tudor, earl of Pembroke, half brother to the king, against Edward, the new duke of York; and herself marched with the larger towards London, where the earl of Warwick had been left with the command of the Yorkists. Pembroke was defeated by Edward at

at Mortimer's cross in Herefordshire, with the loss of near four thousand men. He himself escaped by flight; but his father, sir Owen Tudor, was taken prisoner, and immediately beheaded by Edward's orders. Margaret, however, soon compensated this defeat by a victory which she obtained over the earl of Warwick, at St. Albans, which had already been dyed with civil gore. About two thousand three hundred of the vanquished, perished in the battle and pursuit; and the person of the king fell again into the hands of his own party.

The queen reaped no great advantage from her victory. Edward duke of York advanced upon her from the other side; and collecting the remains of Warwick's army was soon in a condition to give her battle with superior forces. Sensible of her danger, she found it necessary to retreat towards the north; and Edward entered the capital amidst the acclamations of the citizens. Instead of evincing the timid caution of his father, he determined to avail himself of his popularity, and to assume at once the name and dignity of king. His army was ordered to assemble in St. John's Fields; great numbers of people surrounded them; a suitable harangue was pronounced to this mixed multitude; and when it was demanded, whether they would accept of Edward, eldest son of the late duke of York, for their king? they expressed their assent by loud and joyful acclamations. A great number of bishops, lords, magistrates, and other persons of distinction, were next assembled at Baynard's castle, who ratified the popular election; and the new king was proclaimed in London, by the title of Edward IV. A. D. 1461.

In

In this manner ended the reign of Henry VI. a monarch who, while in his cradle, had been proclaimed king both of France and England, and who began his life with the most splendid prospects that any prince in Europe had ever enjoyed. His weakness and his disputed title were the chief causes of the public calamities: but whether his queen, and his ministers, were not also guilty of some great abuses of power, is not easy for us at this distance of time to determine.

The most remarkable law which passed in this reign, was for the election of county members. After the fall of the feudal system, the distinction of tenures was in some measure lost, and every freeholder was, by degrees, admitted to give his vote. This innovation was the occasion of great disorder; and in the eighth and tenth of Henry the sixth, laws were enacted which limited the electors to such as possessed forty shillings a year in land, free from all burdens; a sum equivalent to near twenty pounds of our present money. It should also be observed, that the first instance of debt being contracted on parliamentary security occurs in this reign.

Whatever might be the imputation on the last reign, the new one commenced not under more happy auspices. The peaceful form of Edward the fourth concealed an heart hardened against the emotions of compassion. One Burdett, a tradesman of London, who kept a shop at the sign of the Crown, having jocularly said that he would make his son heir to the crown, this pleasantry was interpreted into a derision of Edward's title; and he was condemned and executed

executed for the offence. Similar acts of tyranny were proper preludes to the events which ensued; and the scaffold, as well as the field, incessantly streamed with the noblest blood of England. From long animosity, the contending families were become implacable; the partisans of the house of Lancaster chose the red rose as their mark of distinction; those of York were denominated from the white; and these intestine wars which harassed England, were thus known over Europe by the name of the quarrel between the two roses.

The spirit of Margaret was not yet broken: she had collected in Yorkshire an army of sixty thousand strong; and the king and the earl of Warwick hastened with forty thousand men to check her progress. In a skirmish for the passage of the river Ayre, the Yorkists were chased back with great slaughter. The earl of Warwick dreading the consequence of this disaster, at a time when a decisive action was every hour expected, immediately ordered his horse to be brought him, which he stabbed before the whole army; and, kissing the hilt of his sword, swore that he was determined to share the fate of the meanest soldier. And, to shew the greater security, a proclamation was at that time issued, giving to every one full liberty to retire; but menacing the severest punishment to those who should discover any symptoms of cowardice in the ensuing battle.

At last, the hostile armies met at Touton; and a fierce and bloody battle ensued, which ended in a total victory on the side of the Yorkists. Edward issued orders to give no quarter. The routed army was pursued to Tadcaster,

Tadcaster, with great bloodshed and confusion; and above thirty-six thousand men are computed to have fallen in the battle and pursuit: among these were the earl of Westmoreland and his brother, sir John Nevil, the earl of Northumberland, the lords Dacres and Welles, and sir Andrew Trollop. The earl of Devonshire, who was now engaged in Henry's party, was brought a prisoner to Edward; and was, soon after, beheaded by martial law at York.

Henry and Margaret had remained at York during the action; but learning the defeat of their army, and being sensible that the prize was irrecoverably lost, they fled with great precipitation into Scotland, accompanied by the duke of Exeter, who, though he had married Edward's sister, had taken part with the Lancastrians, and by Henry duke of Somerset, the principal commander in the unfortunate battle of Touton.

During these civil commotions in England, the Scots had been in a manner passive: the present king James III. was a minor, and the regency was disputed by the queen-dowager and the family of Douglas. Margaret found Scotland little less distracted than England; but on her offering to the council to deliver to them immediately the important fortress of Berwick, and to contract her son in marriage with a sister of king James, they promised the assistance of their arms, to reinstate her family on the throne.

As the danger from that quarter, however, did not seem very urgent, Edward, instead of pursuing the fugitive king and queen, returned to London, where a parliament was summoned for

for settling the government. That assembly no longer hesitated between the two families; they recognized the title of Edward, and passed an act of attainder against Henry and Margaret, against their infant son Edward, and several of their principal adherents.

Domestic peace, however, was not yet restored, nor was there wanting danger from the efforts of foreign powers. Lewis the eleventh, of France, was of an intriguing and politic genius; and to keep alive the flames of civil discord in England, he sent a body of two thousand men at arms to the assistance of Henry. These enabled Margaret again to take the field; but, though reinforced by a numerous train of adventurers from Scotland, and by many partisans of the family of Lancaster, she received a check at Hedgley-more from lord Montagu, brother to the earl of Warwick, who was so encouraged with this success, that while a numerous reinforcement was on their march to join him by orders from Edward, he ventured with his own troops alone to attack the Lancastrians at Hexham, and obtained a complete victory over them. The duke of Somerset, the lords Roos and Hungerford were taken in the pursuit, and immediately beheaded by martial law. Summary justice was in like manner executed on several persons of rank. All those who were spared in the field suffered on the scaffold; and the utter extermination of their adversaries was now become the evident object of the York party.

The fate of the ex-royal family deserves to be recorded. Margaret, flying with her son into a forest, was beset, during the darkness of the

the night, by robbers, who despoiled her of her rings and jewels, and treated her with the utmost indignity. The partition of this rich booty raised a quarrel among them; and while their attention was thus engaged, she took the opportunity of plunging with her son into the depths of the forest, where she wandered for some time, spent with hunger and fatigue, and overwhelmed with terror and affliction. While in this wretched condition, she saw a robber approach with his naked sword; and finding that she had no means of escape, with singular presence of mind, she advanced towards him; and presenting to him the young prince, called out to him, "Here, my friend, I commit to your care the safety of your king's son." The man, whose humanity and generous spirit had been obscured, not entirely lost, by his vicious course of life, was charmed with the confidence reposed in him; and vowed, not only to abstain from all injury against the princess, but to devote himself entirely to her service. By his means she dwelt some time concealed in the forest, and was at last conducted to the sea-coast, whence she made her escape into Flanders. She passed thence to her father's court, where she lived several years in privacy and retirement. Her husband was neither so fortunate nor so dexterous in finding the means of escape. Some of his friends took him under their protection, and

A. D. 1465.

conveyed him into Lancashire; where he remained concealed during a year; but he was at last detected, delivered up to Edward, and thrown into the Tower. The preservation of his life was owing less to the generosity of his enemies, than to the contempt

tempt which they had entertained of his abilities.

The imprisonment of Henry, the expulsion of Margaret, and the execution and confiscation of all the most eminent Lancastrians, seemed to give full security to Edward's government. But the prince had no sooner vanquished his enemies than he delivered himself to the impulse of his amorous passions. Elizabeth Grey the daughter of the dutchess of Bedford, by her second marriage with sir Richard Woodville, and the widow of sir John Grey of Groby, who had been slain in the second battle of St. Albans, fighting on the side of Lancaster, finding her husband's estate confiscated, seized the opportunity, when the king was on a visit to the dutchess of Bedford, to entreat his pity for her impoverished and distressed children. The sight of so much beauty in affliction, strongly affected Edward; and he was reduced in his turn, to the posture of a supplicant at the feet of Elizabeth. But the lady was either averse to dishonourable love, or inflamed with ambition; and the caresses and importunities of the young and amiable Edward proved fruitless against her rigid and inflexible virtue. His passion, stimulated by opposition, carried him beyond all bounds; and he offered to share with her his heart as well as his throne. The marriage was privately celebrated at Grafton; and the secret was carefully kept for a time, from the dilemma to which the king was reduced.

Before his first interview with Elizabeth Grey, Edward had cast his eye on Bona of Savoy, sister of the queen of France, who, he hoped, would, by her marriage, ensure him the friendship

friendship of that power, which was alone both able and inclined to give support and assistance to his rival. To render the negotiation more successful, the earl of Warwick had been dispatched to Paris, where the princess then resided. This nobleman had demanded Bona in marriage for the king; his proposals had been accepted; and nothing remained but the ratification of the terms agreed on, and the bringing over the princess to England. Matters were in this state, when the secret of Edward's marriage broke out, and the haughty earl, deeming himself affronted, immediately returned to England, inflamed with rage and indignation, which Edward was little careful to soften by explanation or apology.

Every incident now tended to widen the breach between the king and this powerful subject. All preferments and honours were lavished on the queen's friends and relations. Warwick bore with impatience the diminution of his influence; and the nobility of England, envying the sudden growth of the Woodvilles, partook in his discontent; but the most considerable associate that he gained was George, duke of Clarence, the king's second brother. This prince was allured by the offer in marriage of the elder daughter of Warwick, co-heir to his immense fortunes, to join the party of that earl; and thus an extensive and dangerous combination was insensibly formed against Edward and his ministry.

A. D. 1469. To secure himself against his factious nobility, Edward entered into an alliance with Charles surnamed the Bold, duke of Burgundy, whose rich demesnes marked him

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as the proper person to oppose the dark and dangerous ambition of Lewis the eleventh. Edward also formed a league with the duke of Brittany; but from these foreign negotiations his attention was withdrawn by domestic insurrection. The improper application of some part of the revenue of St. Leonard's hospital, near York, which had been destined for the relief of the poor, provoked the common people to rise in arms. These being headed by sir Henry Nevil and sir John Coniers, defeated and put to death the earl of Pembroke; and seizing the earl of Rivers, the father of the queen, with his son John, immediately executed them.

A dark shade rests on this part of the English history, and the real views and objects of the principal actors cannot now be developed with any degree of certainty. At the commencement of this rebellion, Warwick resided, together with his son-in-law the duke of Clarence, in his government of Calais; and it appears, that his brother Montagu acted with vigour against the northern rebels. We may thence presume, that the insurrection had not proceeded from the secret counsels and instigation of Warwick. He and Clarence indeed came over to England, offered their service to Edward, were received without any apparent suspicion, and were entrusted by him in the highest commands. Soon after, we find the rebels quieted and dispersed by a general pardon granted by Edward, on the suggestion of the earl of Warwick; but why so courageous a prince, if secure of Warwick's fidelity, should have granted a general pardon to men who had been guilty of such

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violent and personal outrages, is not intelligible; nor why that nobleman, if unfaithful, should have endeavoured to appease a rebellion, from which he was able to reap such advantages. To solve this difficulty we may presume, that, after this insurrection, there was an interval of peace, during which the king loaded the family of Nevil with honours and favours of the highest nature; yet it was not long after, that Edward, being invited to a feast by the archbishop of York, a younger brother of Warwick, entertained a sudden suspicion that they intended to seize his person or to murder him; and in consequence abruptly left the entertainment.

Another rebellion, which is as little accounted for as the preceding events, soon followed this; but it does not appear that the family of Nevil had any particular interest in the quarter where it broke out, or were at all suspected in fomenting it. It arose in Lincolnshire, and was headed by sir Robert Welles, son to the lord of that name. The army of the rebels amounted to thirty thousand men; but the king having defeated them, took their commander prisoner, and ordered him immediately to execution.

Edward, during these transactions, had entertained so little jealousy of the earl of Warwick or duke of Clarence, that he sent them with commissioners of array to levy forces against the rebels; but these malecontents, as soon as they left the court, raised troops in their own name, issued declarations against the government, and complained of grievances, oppressions, and bad ministers. The unexpected defeat of Welles disconcerted all their measures; and

and they were obliged to disband their army, and to fly into Devonshire, whence they embarked, and made sail towards Calais.

The deputy-governor, whom Warwick had left at Calais, was one Vaucler, a Gascon, who seeing him return in this miserable condition, refused him admittance; nor would he permit even the dutchess of Clarence to land, though a a few days before she had been delivered on ship-board of a son, and was at that time much indisposed. A little wine for the use of the ladies was all that he would suffer to be carried on board; but he secretly palliated his conduct to Warwick, by alleging that the fortress was ill supplied with provisions, and that he could not rely on the obedience of the garrison. The earl at least affected to be convinced; and having seized some Flemish vessels, he immediately made sail towards France.

The king of France received him with the greatest demonstrations of regard, and jealous of the alliance between Edward and the duke of Burgundy, he hoped to make him his instrument for re-establishing the house of Lancaster. Nothing could exceed the animosity which had prevailed between that house and the earl of Warwick. But his present distresses, and the entreaties of Lewis, made him hearken to terms of accommodation; and Margaret being sent for from Angers, where she then resided, an agreement, dictated by mutual interest, was soon concluded between them. It was stipulated that Warwick should espouse the cause of Henry, and endeavour to restore him to liberty, and to re-establish him on the throne; that the administration of the government, during the minority

of young Edward, Henry's son, should be entrusted conjointly to the earl of Warwick and the duke of Clarence; that prince Edward should marry the lady Anne, second daughter of that nobleman; and that the crown, in case of the failure of male issue in that prince, should descend to the duke of Clarence, to the entire exclusion of the reigning king and his posterity.

A. D. 1470. Edward, apprised of what had taken place, foresaw that it would be easy to dissolve an alliance composed of such discordant materials. He employed a lady in the train of the dutchess of Clarence, to represent to the duke the imprudence of the connection he had formed with the murderers of his father, and the implacable enemies of his family; and Clarence, struck with the danger of his situation, on a promise of forgiveness, secretly engaged to abandon the Lancastrian party. During this negotiation, Warwick too was secretly carrying on a correspondence of the same nature with his brother, the marquis of Montague, who was entirely trusted by Edward; and like motives produced a like resolution in that nobleman, Confiding in this promise of support, Warwick availed himself of a storm to cross the channel with a body of French troops, and landed at Dartmouth, accompanied by the duke of Clarence.

Edward, though brave and active, had little foresight. He had made no preparation for this event; and when warned by the duke of Burgundy of his danger, he had answered, he wished for nothing more than to see Warwick on English ground. The prodigious popularity, however, of that nobleman, the zeal of the Lancastrian

trian party, and the spirit of discontent with which many were infected, drew such multitudes to his standard, that in a very few days his army amounted to sixty thousand men, and was continually increasing. Edward, who had been engaged in suppressing a rebellion in the north, now hastened southwards to encounter him; and the two armies approached each other near Nottingham. The rapidity of Warwick's progress had incapacitated the duke of Clarence from executing *his* plan of treachery; but the marquis of Montague, having concerted measures with his adherents, took to arms in the night-time, and hastened with loud acclamations to Edward's quarters. The king was alarmed at the noise, and starting from bed, heard the cry of war usually employed by the Lancastrian party. Lord Hastings, his chamberlain, informing him of the danger, urged him to make his escape by speedy flight, from an army where he had so many concealed enemies, and where few seemed zealously attached to his service. He had just time to get on horseback, and to hurry with a small retinue to Lynne in Norfolk, where finding some ships ready, he instantly embarked. Thus, the earl of Warwick, in no longer space than eleven days from his first landing, was left entire master of the kingdom.

But Edward's danger did not end with his embarkation. The Easterlings or Hans-Towns were then at war, both with France and England; and some ships of these people hovering on the English coast, espied the king's vessels, and gave chase to them; nor was it without extreme difficulty that he made his escape into the port

port of Alcmaer in Holland, where he landed almost destitute of every thing.

The duke of Burgundy was embarrassed how to receive the abdicated monarch; and began already to hold out, that his connections were with the kingdom of England, not with the king. Vaucler, the deputy-governor of Calais, declared with great demonstrations of joy for his old party; and every thing promised a full settlement of the English crown in the family of Lancaster. Henry had been delivered from the Tower, and proclaimed king with great solemnity; every statute made during the reign of Edward was repealed; and that prince was declared to be an usurper.

A. D. 1471.

Edward, however, being assisted by the duke of Burgundy, his brother-in-law, though in a covert way, hastened to return: and impatient to take revenge on his enemies, made an attempt to land with his forces, which exceeded not two thousand men, on the coast of Norfolk. Being there repulsed, he sailed northwards, and disembarked at Ravenspur in Yorkshire. Finding that the new magistrates, who had been appointed by the earl of Warwick, kept the people every where from joining him, he pretended, and even made oath, that he came not to challenge the crown, but only the inheritance of the house of York, which of right belonged to him; and that he did not intend to disturb the peace of the kingdom.

This affected moderation, every day brought new partisans to his standard: he was admitted into the city of York; and was soon in such a situation as gave him hopes of succeeding in all his

his former claims and pretensions. Warwick assembled an army at Leicester, with an intention of meeting, and of giving battle to the enemy; but Edward, by taking another road, passed him unmolested, and presented himself before the gates of Londou. He was readily admitted into a capital, the inhabitants of which still dwelt with pleasure on his former courteous and familiar demeanor; and Henry, destined to be the perpetual sport of fortune, again fell into the hands of his enemies.

Warwick, without waiting the arrival of queen Margaret, who was hastening to England, being reinforced by his son-in-law Clarence, and his brother, the marquis of Montague, took post at Barnet, in the vicinity of London. His brother Montague seems to have remained sincerely attached to the interests of his family: but his son-in-law, though bound to him by every tie of honour and gratitude, though he shared the power of the regency, though he had been invested by Warwick in all the honours and patrimony of the house of York, resolved to fulfil the secret engagements which he had formerly taken with his brother, and to support the interests of his own family. Accordingly, he deserted to Edward in the night-time, and carried over a body of twelve thousand men along with him. Warwick was now too far advanced to retreat; and as he rejected with disdain the terms of accommodation offered by Edward and Clarence, he was obliged to hazard a general engagement. The battle was fought with obstinacy on both sides; and the victory remained long undecided between them. But an accident threw the balance to the side of the Yorkists.

Edward's

Edward's cognisance was a sun; that of Warwick a star with rays; and the mistiness of the morning rendering it difficult to distinguish them, the earl of Oxford, who fought on the side of the Lancastrians, was by mistake attacked by his friends, and chased off the field of battle. Warwick, contrary to his usual practice, engaged that day on foot, resolving to show his army that he meant to share every fortune with them, and was slain in the thickest of the engagement. His brother underwent the same fate; and as Edward had issued orders not to give any quarter, a great and undistinguished slaughter was made in the pursuit.

The very day on which this decisive battle was fought, queen Margaret and her son, now about eighteen years of age, and a young prince of great hopes, landed at Weymouth, supported by a small body of French forces. When this princess received intelligence of her husband's captivity, and of the defeat and death of the earl of Warwick, her courage, which had supported her under so many disastrous events, now quite deserted her; and she immediately foresaw all the dismal consequences of this calamity. At first she took sanctuary in the abbey of Beaulieu; but being encouraged by the appearance of Tudor earl of Pembroke, and Courtney earl of Devonshire, of the lords Wenloc and St. John, with other men of rank, who exhorted her still to hope for success, she resumed her former spirit, and determined to defend to the utmost the ruins of her fallen fortunes. Rapidly advancing through the counties of Devon, Somerset, and Gloucester, she increased her army on each day's march; but was at last overtaken by the

the rapid and expeditious Edward at Teukesbury, on the banks of the Severn. The Lancastrians were here totally defeated: the earl of Devonshire and lord Wenloc were killed in the field; the duke of Somerset, and about twenty other persons of distinction, having taken shelter in the church, were dragged out, and immediately beheaded; and the army was entirely dispersed.

Queen Margaret and her unhappy son being taken prisoners, and brought to the king, he asked the prince, after an insulting manner, how he dared to invade his dominions? The young prince, more mindful of his high birth than of his present fortune, replied, that he came thither to claim his just inheritance. The ungenerous Edward, indignant at his answer, and insensible to pity, struck him on the face with his gauntlet; and the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, lord Hastings, and sir Thomas Gray, taking the blow as a signal for farther violence, hurried the prince into the next apartment, and there dispatched him with their daggers. Margaret was thrown into the Tower; where her husband expired a few days after the battle of Teukesbury: but whether he died a natural or violent death is uncertain. It is pretended, and was generally believed, that the duke of Gloucester killed him with his own hands: but the universal odium which that prince has incurred, inclined perhaps the nation to aggravate his crimes, by adding surmises to facts.

A. D. 1472.

In the character of Edward, who was now firmly established on the throne, there was this peculiarity:—he was active in adversity, but unable to resist the allure-

ments

ments of prosperity. He now devoted himself to pleasure and amusement; but was soon rouse from his lethargy by the prospect of foreign conquests. He formed a league with the duke of Burgundy to invade France; for this purpose he obtained from parliament a tenth of rents, or two shillings in the pound; which produced only 31,460l. and they added to this supply a whole fifteenth, and three quarters of another: but as the king deemed these sums still unequal to the undertaking, he attempted to levy money by way of *benevolence*; a kind of exaction which, except during the reigns of Henry the third and Richard the second, had not been much practised in former times, and which, though the consent of the parties was pretended to be gained, could not be deemed entirely voluntary.

A. D. 1475. Due preparations being made, the king passed over to Calais with an army of fifteen hundred men at arms, and fifteen thousand archers; but all his hopes of conquest were damped, by finding that the constable, St. Pol, on whose revolt he depended, neither received him into the towns of which he was master, nor did the duke of Burgundy bring him the smallest assistance. This circumstance gave him great disgust, and inclined him to listen to the pacific proposals of Lewis, who consented to pay Edward seventy-five thousand crowns, on condition that he should immediately withdraw his army from France; and promised to pay him fifty thousand crowns a year during their joint lives. It was farther stipulated, that the dauphin, when of age, should marry Edward's eldest daughter; and these articles were ratified in a personal interview

terview which the two monarchs had near Amiens.

Such were the principal articles of this treaty, which was little honourable to either. Lewis, however, did himself some credit by stipulating for the liberty of queen Margaret, who, though, after the death of her husband and son, she could no longer be formidable to government, was still detained in custody by Edward. Lewis paid fifty thousand crowns for her ransom; and that princess, who had been so active on the stage of the world, and who had experienced such a variety of fortune, passed the remainder of her days in tranquillity and privacy, till the year 1482, when she died.

Though Edward had so little reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the duke of Burgundy, he reserved to that prince a power of acceding to the late treaty; but Charles, when the offer was made him, haughtily replied, that he was able to support himself without the assistance of England, and that he would make no peace with Lewis till three months after Edward's return into his own country. This prince possessed all the ambition and courage of a conqueror; but being defective in policy and prudence, perished at last in battle against the Swiss; a people whom he despised, and who, though brave and free, had hitherto been in a manner overlooked in the general system of Europe.

For some time, Edward had relapsed into his constitutional indolence and love of pleasure, from which he seemed only to awake to exercise an act of tyranny on his own family. The duke of Clarence, after all his services in deserting Warwick, had never been able to regain the king's

king's confidence. He was also an object of displeasure to the queen, as well as to his brother the duke of Gloucester, a prince of the deepest policy, and the most unrelenting ambition. The execution of several of his friends on the most trivial offences, warned him of the combination against himself; but instead of securing his life by silence and reserve, he was open and loud in his resentment. The king, highly offended with his freedom, or using that pretence against him, committed him to the Tower, summoned a parliament, and tried him for his life before the house of peers, on charges too frivolous to deserve the name of crimes.

A sentence of condemnation, however, was a necessary consequence in those times, of any prosecution by the court or the prevailing party; and the duke of Clarence was pronounced guilty by the peers. The house of commons were no less slavish and unjust: they both petitioned for the execution of the duke, and afterwards passed a bill of attainder against him. The measures of the parliament, indeed, during that age, furnish numerous examples of a strange contrast of freedom and servility: they scrupled to grant, and sometimes refused to the king, the smallest supplies, for the most necessary purposes; but they never hesitated to concur in the most flagrant act of injustice or tyranny which fell on any individual.

The only favour which the king granted his brother, after his condemnation, was to leave him the choice of his death; and he was privately drowned in a butt of malmesey in the Tower; a whimsical choice, which implies that he had an extraordinary predilection for that liquor.

liquor. The duke left two children by the elder daughter of the earl of Warwick; a son, created an earl by his grandfather's title, and a daughter, afterwards countess of Salisbury. Both this prince and princess were also unfortunate in their end, and died a violent death; a fate which for many years attended almost all the descendants of the royal blood in England.

All the energies of Edward's reign seem to have terminated with the civil wars: his spirit afterwards sunk in indolence and pleasure. There was no object on which he was more intent, than to have his daughters settled in splendid marriages; but most of these princesses were yet in their infancy, and a chain of accidents frustrated his views. His eldest daughter Elizabeth was contracted to the dauphin; but Lewis, who paid no regard to treaties, found his advantage in affiancing the dauphin to the princess Margaret, daughter of the emperor Maximilian. Edward, however, notwithstanding his indolence, prepared to avenge the indignity; when the French monarch, to avoid the blow, by a proper distribution of presents in the court of Scotland, incited James to make war upon England.

This prince, who lived on bad terms with his own nobility, and whose force was very unequal to the enterprise, levied an army; but when he was ready to enter England, the barons, conspiring against his favourites, put them to death without trial; and the army presently disbanded. The duke of Gloucester, attended by the duke of Albany, James's brother, who had been banished his country, entered Scotland at the head of an army, took Berwick, and obliged the

Scots to accept of a peace, by which they resigned that fortress to Edward. This success emboldened the king to think more seriously of a French war; but while he was making preparations for that enterprise, he was seized with a distemper, of which he expired in the forty-second year of his age, and the twenty-third of his reign. Besides five daughters, Edward left two sons: Edward prince of Wales, his successor, then in his thirteenth year, and Richard duke of York, four years younger. From his eventful history, the character of this sovereign may be easily deduced. It is not one on which the pen of history can dwell with satisfaction.

A. D. 1483.

Edward, on his death bed, had entrusted the regency to his brother the duke of Gloucester, then absent in the north, and he had earnestly, though ineffectually exhorted the rival nobles to live in peace and unanimity, during the tender years of his son. No sooner, however, were his eyes closed, than their jealousies broke out; and all were anxious to conciliate the favour of the duke of Gloucester.

That prince, whose ambition was unbounded, as his conscience was *seared*, already aspired to the throne; but he proceeded under the mask of the deepest dissimulation. By his professions of attachment, he gained credit with the queen, and prevailed on her to countermand the order which she had issued to her brother, the earl of Rivers, to levy an army; and to direct him to bring up the young prince from the castle of Ludlow to London, with only his ordinary retinue.

Meanwhile, the duke of Gloucester set out from

from York, attended by a numerous train of the northern gentry. When he reached Northampton, he was joined by the duke of Buckingham, who was also attended by a splendid retinue; and as he heard that the king was hourly expected on that road, he resolved to wait his arrival, under colour of conducting him thence in person to London. The earl of Rivers, apprehensive that the place would be too narrow to contain so many attendants, sent his pupil forward by another road to Stony Stratford; and came himself to Northampton, in order to pay his repects to the duke of Gloucester. He was received with the greatest appearance of cordiality; passed the evening in an amicable manner with Gloucester and Buckingham; and proceeded on the road with them next day to join the king. But on entering Stony Stratford, he was arrested by orders from the duke of Gloucester, together with sir Richard Gray, one of the queen's sons, and instantly conducted to Pomfret. Gloucester approached the young prince with the greatest demonstrations of respect; and endeavoured to satisfy him with regard to the violence committed on his uncle and brother; but Edward was too much attached to these near relations, to dissemble his displeasure at the treatment they had experienced.

On the intelligence of this revolution, the queen fled to the sanctuary of Westminster, attended by the marquis of Dorset; and carried thither the five princesses, together with the duke of York. But Gloucester, anxious to have the duke of York also in his power, made use of the archbishops of Canterbury and York, who, duped by the villain's artifice, prevailed on the queen

queen to deliver up the prince, that he might be present at the inauguration of his brother. Yet she complied not without extreme reluctance; and when she parted from him, she seemed struck with a kind of presage of his cruel fate. She tenderly embraced him, and bedewing him with her tears, bade him an eternal adieu.

The council, without waiting for the consent of parliament, had invested the duke of Gloucester with the high dignity of protector; and having so far succeeded in his views, he no longer hesitated in removing all the obstructions which lay between him and the throne, to which he resolved to wade through blood. The death of the earl of Rivers, and of the other prisoners detained in Pomfret, was first determined; and he easily obtained the consent of the duke of Buckingham, as well as of lord Hastings, to this violent and sanguinary measure, which was promptly executed.

The protector then assailed the duke of Buckingham, and by specious arguments, and offers of great private advantage, obtained from him a promise of supporting him in all his enterprises; but on sounding lord Hastings, he found that nobleman impregnable in his allegiance and fidelity to the children of Edward. He therefore determined on his destruction likewise; and summoning a council in the Tower, that nobleman, suspecting no design against him, repaired thither without hesitation. The duke of Gloucester, with that dark insidious malice for which he was so remarkable, on taking his place at the council-table, appeared in the easiest and most jovial humour imaginable. He seemed to indulge himself in familiar conversation with the counsellors,

sellors, before they should enter on business; and having paid some compliments to Morton bishop of Ely, on the excellent strawberries which he raised in his garden at Holborn, he begged the favour of having a dish of them, which of course was readily accorded. The protector then left the council, as if called away by some other business; but soon after returning with an angry and inflamed countenance, he asked them, what punishment those deserved that had plotted against *his* life, who was so nearly related to the king, and was entrusted with the administration of government? Hastings replied, that they merited the punishment of traitors. "These traitors," cried the protector, "are the sorceress, my brother's wife, and Jane Shore his mistress, with others their associates: see to what a condition they have reduced me by their incantations and witchcraft;" upon which he laid bare his arm, all shrivelled and decayed. The counsellors, who knew that this infirmity had attended him from his birth, looked on each other with amazement; and particularly lord Hastings, who, as he had since Edward's death engaged in an intrigue with Jane Shore, was naturally anxious concerning the issue of these extraordinary proceedings. "Certainly, my lord," said he, "if they be guilty of these crimes they deserve the severest punishment." "And do you reply to me," exclaimed the protector, "with your ifs and your ands? You are the chief abettor of that witch Shore: you are yourself a traitor: and I swear by St. Paul, that I will not dine before your head be brought me." Instantly, he struck the table with his hand;

hand: armed men rushed in at the signal: the counsellors were thrown into the utmost consternation; and Hastings being seized, was hurried away, and instantly beheaded on a timber log which lay in the court of the Tower.

Lord Stanley, the archbishop of York, the bishop of Ely, and other counsellors, were committed prisoners in different chambers of the Tower; and the protector, in order to carry on the farce of his accusations, ordered the goods of Jane Shore to be seized; and summoned her to answer before the council for sorcery and witchcraft. But as no proofs of this kind could possibly be produced, he directed her to be tried in the spiritual court for her adulteries and lewdness: and she did penance in a white sheet at St. Paul's, in the face of the people. This lady was born of reputable parents in London, was well educated, and married to a substantial citizen; but unhappily, views of interest, more than the maid's inclinations, had been consulted in the match; and her mind, though framed for virtue, proved unable to resist the allurements of Edward. But while seduced from her duty by this gay and amorous monarch, she still made herself respectable by her other virtues; and the ascendant which her charms and vivacity long maintained over him, were all employed in acts of beneficence and humanity. She lived, however, not only to feel the bitterness of shame imposed on her by this tyrant, but to experience, in old age and poverty, the ingratitude of those courtiers who long solicited her friendship, and had been protected by her credit; and amidst a court, inured to the most atrocious crimes, the

frailties

frailties of this woman were a plea for all violations of friendship towards her, and all neglect of former obligations.

After the murder of Hastings, the protector no longer made a secret of his intentions to usurp the crown. He caused it to be circulated, that Edward had been privately married to lady Eleanor Talbot, before he espoused the lady Elizabeth Grey, and that consequently the offspring of the last marriage were illegitimate; and in order to feel the pulse of the people, he prevailed on a time-serving divine, named Shaw, to pronounce his panegyric in a sermon at St. Paul's. It was concerted that the duke should enter the church in the midst of this discourse, when it was expected the auditors would cry out, "God save king Richard!" but by a mistake worthy of the farce, the protector arrived too late: the preacher was abashed; and the audience maintained a profound silence.

A new expedient, however, was tried to work on the people. The mayor, who was brother to Shaw, and entirely in the protector's interests, calling an assembly of the citizens, the duke of Buckingham, who possessed some talents for eloquence, harangued them on the protector's title to the crown, and displayed those numerous virtues of which he pretended that prince was possessed. He next asked them, whether they would have the duke for king? and then paused, in expectation of hearing the cry, "God save king Richard!" He was surprised to observe them silent; and turning about to the mayor, asked him the reason. The mayor replied, that perhaps they did not understand him. Buckingham then repeated his discourse with

with some variation; inforced the same topics, asked the same question, and was received with the same silence. "I now see the cause," said the mayor; "the citizens are not accustomed to be harangued by any but their recorder; and know not how to answer a person of your grace's quality." The recorder, Fitz-Williams, was then commanded to repeat the substance of the duke's speech; but the man, who was averse to the office, took care to have it understood, that he only conveyed to them the sense of the duke of Buckingham. Still the audience preserved a profound silence: "this is wonderful obstinacy," cried the duke: "express your meaning, my friends, one way or other: when we apply to you on this occasion, it is merely from the regard which we bear to you. The lords and commons have sufficient authority, without your consent, to appoint a king: but I require you here to declare in plain terms, whether or not you will have the duke of Gloucester for your sovereign?" On this, some of the meanest apprentices, incited by the protector's and Buckingham's servants, raised a feeble cry of "God save king Richard!" This was judged sufficient; and Buckingham, with the mayor, hastened to Baynard's castle, where the protector then resided, that they might make him a tender of the crown.

Though there can be no doubt that Richard was at the bottom of all this, he pretended to be apprehensive for his personal safety, when he was told that a great multitude was in the court. At last, however, he was persuaded to step forth, and asked the meaning of their intrusion and importunity. Buckingham told him that the nation was resolved to have him for king: the

the protector declared his purpose of maintaining his loyalty to the present sovereign, and exhorted them to adhere to the same resolution. It was rejoined, that the people were determined to have another prince; and if he rejected their unanimous voice, they must look out for one who would be more compliant. This argument was too powerful to be resisted; he consented to accept of the crown: and thenceforth behaved as legitimate and rightful sovereign.

This ridiculous farce was soon after followed by as deep a tragedy as any the English history affords. Not satisfied with taking possession of the throne, Richard gave orders to sir Robert Brakenbury, constable of the Tower, to put his nephews to death; but this gentleman, who had sentiments of honour, refused to stain his hands in the infamous deed. The tyrant then sent for sir James Tyrrel, who promised obedience; and he ordered Brakenbury to resign to this gentleman the keys and government of the Tower for one night. Tyrrel chusing three associates, Slater, Dighton, and Forest, came in the night-time to the door of the chamber where the princes were lodged; and sending in the assassins, he bade them execute their commission while he himself staid without. They found the young princes in bed, and fallen into a profound sleep. After suffocating them with the bolster and pillows, they showed their naked bodies to Tyrrel, who ordered them to be buried at the foot of the stairs, deep in the ground, under a heap of stones. These circumstances were all confessed by the bloody actors in the following reign: and yet they were never punished for the crime; probably,

probably, because Henry desired to establish it as a principle, that the commands of the reigning sovereign ought to justify every enormity in those who paid obedience to them.*

CHAP. IX.

The Reigns of Richard III. *and Henry* VII.

THE first acts of Richard were to shew his gratitude to those who had assisted him in usurping the crown. Thomas, lord Howard, was created duke of Norfolk; Thomas Howard, his son, earl of Surry; and the duke of Buckingham was invested with the office of constable, and received a grant of the forfeited estate of Bohun earl of Hereford.

But it was impossible that any durable friendship could subsist between men of such corrupt minds as Richard and Buckingham. Whether Richard, dreading his power, meditated the ruin of this formidable subject, or the demands of Buckingham increased with compliance, certain it is the latter early began to conspire against the government.

Encouraged by Morton bishop of Ely, a zealous Lancastrian, the duke cast his eye to-

* In the reign of Charles II. the bones of two persons were found in the place indicated, which exactly corresponded by their size to the ages of Edward V. and his brother; and being judged the undoubted remains of these unhappy princes, were deposited in Westminster Abbey, under a marble tomb.

ward

ward the young earl of Richmond, as the only person capable of opposing an usurper, whose murder of the young princes had rendered him the object of general detestation. Henry earl of Richmond was at this time detained in a kind of honourable custody by the duke of Brittany; and his descent, which seemed to give him some pretensions to the crown, had for some time been a great object of jealousy. He derived his lineage from John of Gaunt, and was nearly allied to Henry VI. His mother becoming a widow, had espoused, in second marriage, sir Henry Stafford, uncle to Buckingham, and after the death of that gentleman had married lord Stanley, but had no children by either of these husbands; and her son Henry was thus, in the event of her death, the sole heir of all her fortunes; and at a period when hereditary descent was but laxly regarded, had many plausible and even fair pretensions to the crown.

As all the descendants of the house of York were now either women or minors, Morton conceived the idea of uniting the opposite factions, by contracting a marriage between the earl of Richmond and the princess Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Edward IV.; and the queen dowager, finding in this prospect the probable means of revenge for the murder of her brother and her sons, readily embraced the project. But the conspiracy had not escaped the vigilant eye of Richard; he rapidly levied troops, and summoning Buckingham to appear at court, that nobleman replied by taking arms in Wales. At that very time, however, there happened to fall such heavy rains, so incessant and

and continued, as exceeded any known in the memory of man; and the Severne, with the other rivers in that neighbourhood, swelled to a height which rendered them impassable, and prevented Buckingham from marching into the heart of England to join his associates. The Welshmen, partly moved by superstition at this extraordinary event, and partly distressed by famine in their camp, fell off from him; and Buckingham, finding himself deserted, put on a disguise, and took shelter in the house of Bannister, an old servant of his family. But being detected in his retreat, he was brought to the king at Salisbury, and instantly put to death. The other conspirators hearing of his misfortune, dispersed; and the marquis of Dorset and the bishop of Ely made their escape beyond sea. Some who fell into Richard's hands were executed; yet he seems not to have acted with indiscriminate severity; though we are told of one gentleman who suffered under colour of this rebellion, but in reality, for a distich of quibbling verses, which he had composed against Richard and his ministers:

"The rat, the cat, and Lovel, that dog,
"Rule all England under the hog:"

alluding to the names of Ratcliffe, Catesby, and Lovel; and to Richard's arms, which were a boar.

The earl of Richmond, who had sailed from St. Maloes, being informed of the misfortunes of his friends, retired again to the court of Brittany; and the king, every where triumphant, created his only son Edward, then a youth of twelve years of age, prince of Wales.

To gain the confidence of the Yorkists, Richard courted the queen-dowager, who ventured

to

to leave her sanctuary, and put herself and her daughter in his power. This induced the tyrant to carry farther his views for the establishment of his throne. He had married Anne, the second daughter of the earl of Warwick, and widow of Edward prince of Wales, whom Richard himself had murdered; but this princess having born him but one son, who died about this time, he considered her as an invincible obstacle to the settlement of his fortune, and he was believed to have carried her off by poison; a crime by no means too black for such a monster to perpetrate. He now thought it in his power to remove the chief perils which threatened his government. The earl of Richmond, he knew, could never be formidable but from his projected marriage with the princess Elizabeth, the true heir of the crown; he therefore intended, by means of a papal dispensation, to espouse, himself, this princess, and thus to unite in his own family their contending titles. The queen-dowager, eager to recover her lost authority, neither scrupled this incestuous alliance, nor felt any horror at marrying her daughter to the murderer of her sons and her brother. She even joined so far her interests with those of the usurper, that she wrote to all her partisans, and, among the rest, to her son the marquis of Dorset, desiring them to withdraw from the earl of Richmond; an injury which the earl could never afterwards forgive. The court of Rome, at the same time, was applied to for a dispensation; and Richard thought that he could easily defend himself during the interval, till it arrived, when he hoped for a full and secure settlement.

 But

But the crimes of the tyrant were become so shocking to humanity, that they united against him every person of probity and honour. All the exiles flocked to the earl of Richmond in Brittany, who dreading treachery, made his escape into France. There he found protection and assistance from the ministers of Charles the VIIIth; and with a small army of two thousand men he sailed from Harfleur, and landed without opposition at Milford-haven in Wales.

Richard, who knew not in what quarter to expect the invader, had taken post at Nottingham, in the centre of the kingdom. He there heard that his rival had been joined by several persons of consequence; but his danger proceeded not so much from the zeal of his open enemies, as from the infidelity of his pretended friends. Except the duke of Norfolk, scarcely any nobleman was attached to his cause; but the persons of whom he entertained the greatest suspicion, were lord Stanley and his brother sir William; whose connections with the family of Richmond, notwithstanding their professions of attachment to his person, were never entirely forgotten, or overlooked by him. When he empowered lord Stanley to levy forces, he still retained his eldest son, lord Strange, as a pledge for his fidelity; and that nobleman was, on this account, obliged to employ great caution and reserve in his proceedings. He raised a powerful body of his friends and retainers in Cheshire and Lancashire, but without openly declaring himself; and, though Henry had received secret assurances of his friendly intentions, the armies on both sides knew not what to infer from his equivocal behaviour. The

two

two rivals at last approached each other at Bosworth, near Leicester; Henry of Richmond at the head of six thousand men, the usurper Richard, with an army of more than double the number. Stanley, who commanded above seven thousand men, took care to post himself at Atherstone, not far from the hostile camps, and he made such a disposition as enabled him, as occasion might require, to join either party. Richard had too much sagacity not to discover his intentions from those movements; but he kept the secret from his own men for fear of discouraging them; nor did he take immediate revenge on Stanley's son, as some of his courtiers advised him; because he hoped that so valuable a pledge would induce the father to prolong still farther his ambiguous conduct; certain that a victory over the earl of Richmond would enable him to take ample revenge on all his enemies, open and concealed.

The van of Richmond's army, consisting of archers, was commanded by the earl of Oxford; sir Gilbert Talbot led the right wing; sir John Savage the left; the earl himself, accompanied by his uncle, the earl of Pembroke, posted himself in the main body. Richard also took post in his main body, and entrusted the command of his van to the duke of Norfolk: as his wings were never engaged, we have not learned the names of the several commanders. Soon after the battle began, lord Stanley, whose conduct in this whole affair discovers great precaution and abilities, appeared in the field, and declared for the earl of Richmond. This measure, which was unexpected by the men, though not by their leaders, had a proportional effect on both armies;

it inspired unusual courage into Henry's soldiers; it threw Richard's into dismay and confusion. The intrepid tyrant, sensible of his desperate situation, cast his eye around the field, and descrying his rival at no great distance, drove furiously against him, in hopes that either Henry's death or his own would decide the victory between them. He killed with his own hands sir William Brandon, standard bearer to the earl; he dismounted sir John Cheyney; and was now within reach of Richmond himself, who declined not the combat; when sir William Stanley, breaking in with his troops, surrounded Richard, who was overwhelmed by numbers, and perished by a fate too mild and honourable for his multiplied and detestable enormities. The usurper being killed, his men every where sought for safety by flight.

A. D. 1485.

There fell in this battle about four thousand of the vanquished; and among these the duke of Norfolk, and several other persons of high rank. The loss was inconsiderable on the side of the victors. The body of Richard was found in the field, covered with dead enemies, and all besmeared with blood: it was thrown carelessly across a horse; carried to Leicester amidst the shouts of the insulting spectators; and interred in the Gray-Friars church of that place. Several of his adherents were soon after beheaded.

To be an apologist for Richard, is to shew favour to vice. All agree that he was ready to commit the most horrid crimes which appeared necessary for his purposes; and it is certain, that all his courage and capacity, qualities in which he really seems not to have been deficient, would

would never have made compensation to the people for the danger of the precedent, and for the contagious example of vice and murder, exalted upon the throne. In regard to his person, he was of small stature, hump-backed, and had a harsh disagreeable countenance; so that his body was in every particular no less deformed than his mind.

The victory at Bosworth was entirely decisive; and the earl of Richmond was immediately saluted with acclamations of "long live Henry the VIIth." He accepted the title without hesitation; and asserting his claim to the throne as heir to the house of Lancaster, was determined never to allow it to be discussed. He therefore avoided all application to parliament for a settlement of the crown; and his antipathy to the house of York permitted him not to ingraft his pretensions with those of the princess Elizabeth, his settled nuptials with whom he was determined to postpone till after the ceremony of his coronation.

This, however, was deferred on account of a dreadful malady that raged in London, known by the name of the *sweating sickness*,* which, fatal as it was, seemed not to be propagated by any contagious infection, but arose from the general disposition of the air and of the human body. In less than twenty-four hours the patient commonly died or recovered; but when the pestilence had exerted its fury, for a few weeks, it was observed to be considerably abated.

Preparations were then made for the cere-

* It is said that this malady affected only the natives of England, and that strangers were safe from its influence.

mony

mony of Henry's coronation. In order to heighten the splendour of that spectacle, he bestowed the rank of knight banneret on twelve persons; and conferred peerages on three. Jasper earl of Pembroke, his uncle, was created duke of Bedford; Thomas lord Stanley, his father-in-law, earl of Derby; and Edward Courtnay, earl of Devonshire. At the coronation likewise there appeared a new institution, which the king had established for security as well as pomp, a band of fifty archers, who were termed yeomen of the guard. But, lest the people should take umbrage at this unusual symptom of jealousy in the prince, as if it implied a personal diffidence of his subjects, he declared the institution to be perpetual.

In the parliament that was soon after assembled at Westminster, a scruple was started, whether, as the king himself had been attainted, his right of succession might not thence be exposed to doubt. But the judges asserted, "That the crown takes away all defects and stops in blood; and that from the time the king assumed the royal authority the fountain was clear, and all attainders and corruptions of blood discharged." This maxim was readily received by the parliament, who proceeded to settle the entail of the crown according to the pleasure of the king. No mention was made of the princess Elizabeth: it was voted, "that the inheritance of the crown should rest, remain, and abide in the king;" and "that the succession should be secured to the heirs of his body;" but he pretended not in the case of their failure to give a preference to the house of Lancaster over that of York.

As

As an act of gratitude, the king had restored to Edward Strafford, eldest son of the duke of Buckingham, the honours and fortune of his family; but the ministers whom he trusted and favoured were chosen from the clergy; John Morton and Richard Fox, who were successively raised to the sees of Canterbury and Winchester, were the persons in whom he chiefly confided; for Henry, as lord Bacon observes, loved to employ and advance prelates; because, having rich bishoprics to bestow, it was easy for him to reward their services.

Being now firmly seated on the throne, in order to comply with the wishes of the people and the parliament, rather than to gratify any partial predilection, he resolved to espouse the princess Elizabeth. His marriage was celebrated at London, and that with greater appearance of universal joy than either his first entry or his coronation. Henry remarked with much displeasure this general favour borne to the house of York. The suspicions which arose from it not only disturbed his tranquillity during his whole reign, but bred disgust towards his consort herself, and poisoned all his domestic enjoyments. Though virtuous, amiable, and obsequious to the last degree, she never met with a proper return of affection, or even of complaisance, from her husband; and the malignant ideas of faction, in his sullen mind, prevailed over all the sentiments of conjugal endearment.

Soon after his nuptials, Henry projected a progress into the north, where the friends of the house of York, and even the partisans of Richard, were numerous, in hopes of curing, by

by his presence and conversation, the prejudices of the malecontents. When he arrived at Nottingham, he heard that viscount Lovel, with sir Humphrey Stafford, and Thomas his brother, had secretly withdrawn themselves from their sanctuary at Colchester: but this news appeared not to him of such importance as to stop his journey, and he proceeded forward to York. He there received fresh intelligence, that the Staffords had levied an army, and were marching to besiege the city of Worcester; and that Lovel, at the head of three or four thousand men, was approaching to attack him in York. Henry, however, was not dismayed; his active courage, full of resources, immediately prompted him to find the proper remedy. Though surrounded with enemies, he assembled a small body of troops in whom he could confide; and put them under the command of the duke of Bedford, having joined to them all his own attendants. But he found that this hasty armament was more formidable by their spirit and their zealous attachment to him, than by the arms or military stores with which they were provided. He therefore gave Bedford orders not to approach the enemy; but previously to try every proper expedient to disperse them. Bedford published a general promise of pardon to the rebels, which had a greater effect on their leader than on his followers. Lovel, who had undertaken an enterprise that exceeded his courage and capacity, was so terrified with the fear of desertion among his troops, that he suddenly withdrew himself; and after lurking some time in Lancashire, made his escape into Flanders, where he was protected by the dutchess of Burgundy. His army submitted

mitted to the king's clemency; and the other rebels hearing of this success, raised the siege of Worcester, and dispersed themselves. The Staffords took sanctuary in the church of Culham, a village near Abingdon; but they were taken thence: the elder was executed at Tyburn; the younger obtained a pardon.

Henry's joy for this success was followed, some time after, by the birth of a prince, to whom he gave the name of Arthur, in memory of the famous British king of that name, from whom it was pretended the family of Tudor derived its descent. But notwithstanding this new domestic tie, the harshness with which he treated the queen created a disgust to his government, which soon appeared by some extraordinary incidents.

There lived in Oxford one Richard Simon, a priest of a subtle and enterprising genius. This man, for the purpose of disturbing Henry, had cast his eyes on Lambert Simnel, a youth of fifteen years of age, the son of a baker, but endowed with understanding above his years, and address above his condition. Him he instructed to personate the unfortunate earl of Warwick, son of the duke of Clarence, who had been committed to the tower at the commencement of this reign; and the queen dowager, irritated by the harsh treatment to which her daughter was exposed, and the insignificance into which she was fallen, was suspected of countenancing the imposture.

A. D. 1480.

It was in Ireland the scene was first opened; that country had been governed by Clarence, and was still attached to his memory; and no sooner did Simnel present himself to the earl of Kildare

Kildare the deputy, and claim his protection as the unfortunate Warwick, than that credulous nobleman acknowledged him; while the city of Dublin followed the example of the deputy, and tendered its allegiance to Simnel as the true Plantagenet.

Henry, perplexed at the news of this revolt, first seized the queen-dowager, whom he confined in the nunnery of Bermondsey, where she ended her life in poverty and solitude. He next exposed Warwick through the streets of London; but though this had its effect in England, it convinced not the people of Ireland, who reproached the king with having shewn a counterfeit personage.

The conspiracy soon extending, it was entered into by the earl of Lincoln, son of the duke of Suffolk, and of Elizabeth, eldest sister of Edward IV. a nobleman of courage and ambition. Having established a correspondence in Lancashire, he had returned to Flanders, where Lovel had arrived a little before him; and he lived in the court of his aunt the dutchess of Burgundy.

That princess, the widow of Charles the Bold, had acquired great authority among the Flemings, and hearing with indignation of the malignant jealousy entertained by Henry against her family, she was determined to make him repent of that enmity, to which so many of her friends had fallen victims. After consulting with Lincoln and Lovel, she hired a body of two thousand veteran Germans, under the command of Martin Swart, a brave and experienced officer; and sent them over, together with these two noblemen, to join Simnel in Ireland. The countenance given by persons of such high rank, and the

the accession of this military force, much raised the courage of the Irish, and made them entertain the resolution of invading England, as well for the sake of plunder as of revenge for injuries received.

Henry, apprized of the designs of his enemies, prepared himself for defence. He ordered troops to be levied in different parts of the kingdom, and put them under the command of the duke of Bedford and the earl of Oxford. And, to gratify the people by an appearance of devotion, he made a pilgrimage to our lady of Walsingham; and there offered up prayers for success, and for deliverance from his enemies.

Being informed that Simnel was landed at Foudrey in Lancashire, he drew together his forces, and advanced towards the enemy as far as Coventry. The rebels had entertained hopes that the disaffected countries in the north would rise in their favour; but the people in general, convinced of Lambert's imposture, and kept in awe by the king's reputation for success and conduct, either remained in tranquillity, or gave assistance to the royal army. The earl of Lincoln, therefore, who commanded the rebels, finding no hopes but in victory, was determined to bring the matter to a speedy decision; and the king, supported by the native courage of his temper, and emboldened by a great accession of volunteers, declined not the conflict. The hostile armies met at Stoke, in the county of Nottingham, and a bloody and obstinate battle commenced. The leaders of the rebels were resolved to conquer or to perish; and they inspired their troops with like resolution. The Germans also, being veteran and experienced soldiers, kept the

 event

event long doubtful; and even the Irish, though ill-armed and almost defenceless, showed themselves not defective in spirit and bravery. The king's victory was purchased with loss, but was entirely decisive. Lincoln, Broughton, and Swart, perished in the field of battle, with four thousand of their followers, and as Lovel was never more heard of, he was believed to have undergone the same fate.* Simnel, with his tutor Simon, was taken prisoner. Simon, being a priest, was only committed to close custody; and Simnel, as being too contemptible to be an object either of apprehension or resentment, was pardoned, and made a scullion in the king's kitchen; whence he was afterwards advanced to the rank of a falconer. The adherents of Simnel, however, were punished with great severity, and Henry, in a progress through the kingdom, gratified at once his avarice and revenge, by levying heavy fines on the delinquents.

A.D. 1488.

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* On the authority of the late Mr. Thomas Warton, a very few days before his lamented death, and who had his information, as well as can now be recollected, from Dr. Dennison, a witness of what is going to be related, some light may perhaps be thrown on the fate of this distinguished nobleman. The walls of his once magnificent seat at Minster Lovel, Oxfordshire, of which some small ruins still remain, being pulled down for the sake of the materials, early in the last century, a secret chamber was discovered with a trap door, and in it a skeleton of a person in complete armour was found. From hence it was supposed, and on probable grounds, that this was the body of Lord Lovel, who, after escaping from the battle of Stoke, took refuge in this place, and from some cause, not now to be accounted for, was left to perish in his concealment. EDITOR.

The

The prosperous situation of Henry's domestic affairs now afforded him leisure to observe the situation of the neighbouring kingdoms. The throne of Scotland was filled by James the third, a prince of little industry and narrow genius. Spain, by the union of Castile and Arragon, in the persons of Ferdinand and Isabella; and by the conquest of Granada from the Moors, began to make a great figure in the transactions of Europe.

France, during the two preceding reigns, had attained a mighty increase of power and greatness; most of the great fiefs, Normandy, Champagne, Anjou, Dauphiny, Guienne, Provence, and Burgundy, had been united to the crown; and during the minority of Charles the eighth, Anne, lady of Beaujeu, who, as his sister, had obtained the regency, formed the project of acquiring Brittany, the last independent fief of the monarchy. The reigning duke was of slender capacity; and by abandoning himself to the counsels of Peter Landais, a man of mean birth, had disgusted his nobles. They had seized the obnoxious minister, and had put him to death; and their apprehensions of the resentment of their prince induced them to invite the court of France to an invasion of their country.

The French presently overrun Brittany; and the duke himself was obliged to seek shelter in Nantz. He in vain invoked the assistance of England, and reminded Henry of the protection he had granted him in his distress. That monarch was not ignorant what an important acquisition Brittany would be to France; but he was averse to the expence and hazard of war; and he flattered himself some unforeseen event

 would

would arise, and break the designs of the lady Beaujeu. But while he rested in this expectation, he received the unwelcome intelligence that the Bretons had been defeated in a decisive action; and that the duke of Orleans, and many other persons of high rank, were made prisoners.

The death of the duke, which followed soon after, threw affairs into still greater confusion; and Henry now seemed determined to act with vigour. An insurrection which had been excited in the north on account of some new tax, had been easily quelled by the earl of Surry, whom the king had restored to liberty and had taken into favour; and no longer alarmed by domestic enemies, he dispatched lord Broke with six thousand men to the defence of Brittany: but though the English and the Bretons were for some time masters of the field, affairs were in such confusion, that the general reimbarked his troops for England.

Meanwhile, Anne dutchess of Brittany, pressed on every side, had consented to espouse Maximilian king of the Romans, and the ceremony was performed by proxy. Yet this did not prevent the lady of Beaujeu from entertaining the prospect of obtaining her hand for Charles the eighth: and though the affections of Anne were fixed on Maximilian, and she was strongly prejudiced against Charles, as the author of all the calamities which had befallen her family, such was the distress to which she was reduced, that she was compelled to submit, and was married at Langay, in Touraine, to the king of France.

The rage of Maximilian at this event was vented

vented in the most indecent expressions; and Henry had never more reason to reproach himself with misconduct. He immediately declared his resolution to invade France; and under that pretence he issued a commission for levying a *Benevolence* on his people; a species of taxation which had been justly abolished, but which we have seen virtually revived in more modern times, under a less plausible name. Archbishop Morton, the chancellor, instructed the commissioners to employ a dilemma, in which every one might be comprehended: if the persons applied to, lived frugally, they were told that their parsimony must necessarily have enriched them: if their method of living was splendid and hospitable, they were concluded to be opulent on account of their expences. This device was by some called chancellor Morton's fork, by others his crutch. A. D. 1492.

Both the parliament and nobles became the ready tools of the king on this occasion. The former granted him two fifteenths; the latter collected their vassals to attend him. On the 6th of October, the king arrived at Calais with an army of twenty-five thousand foot and sixteen hundred horse, and laid siege to Bulloigne; but it was soon apparent that he had no serious intention of pushing on the war to such extremities as he pretended, and a negotiation was soon opened between him and Charles. The latter, anxious to secure Brittany, and eager to invade Italy, consented to pay Henry seven hundred and forty-five thousand crowns, and stipulated a yearly pension to him and his heirs of twenty-five thousand crowns. Thus the king, as remarked by his historian, made profit upon his

 subjects

subjects for the war, and upon his enemies for the peace.

Circumstances now seemed to leave Henry in possession of durable tranquillity; but his inveterate enemies soon raised him an adversary, who long kept him in disquietude. The dutchess of Burgundy, full of resentment for the depression of her family, had propagated a report that her nephew, Richard Plantagenet, duke of York, had escaped from the tower, and was still alive; and she had been looking out for some young man proper to represent that prince.

Warbeck, a renegado Jew of Tournay, who had visited London in the reign of Edward IV. having had opportunities of being known to the king, and obtaining his favour, he prevailed with that prince, whose manners were very affable, to stand godfather to a son, born in this country, to whom he gave the name of Peter, corrupted, after the Flemish manner, into Peterkin or Perkin. It was by some believed that Edward, among his amorous adventures, had a secret commerce with Warbeck's wife, and people thence accounted for that resemblance, which was afterwards remarked between young Perkin and that monarch. Some years after the birth of this child, Warbeck returned to Tournay, whence, Perkin his son, by different accidents, was carried from place to place, and his birth and fortune became thereby unknown, or difficult to be traced. The variety of his adventures had happily favoured the natural versatility and sagacity of his genius; and he seemed to be a youth perfectly fitted to act any part, or assume any character. In this light he had

had been represented to the dutchess of Burgundy, who, struck with the concurrence of so many circumstances suited to her purpose, desired to be made acquainted with him. She found him to exceed her most sanguine expectations; so comely did he appear in his person, so graceful in his air, so courtly in his address, so full of docility and good sense in his behaviour and conversation. The lessons necessary to be taught him, in order to his personating the duke of York, were soon learned by a youth of such quick apprehension; but as the season seemed not then favourable for his enterprise, Margaret, in order the better to conceal him, sent him, under the care of lady Brampton, into Portugal, where he remained a year, in perfect secrecy.

The war which was then ready to break out between France and England, seemed to afford a proper opportunity for launching this impostor, and Ireland, which still retained its attachments to the house of York, was chosen as the proper place for his first appearance. He landed at Corke, and immediately assuming the name of Richard Plantagenet, drew to him partisans among that credulous people. He wrote letters to the earls of Desmond and Kildare, inviting them to join his party; and dispersed every where the strange intelligence of his escape from the cruelty of his uncle Richard; while men, fond of every thing new and wonderful, began to make him the general subject of their discourse, and even the object of their regard.

The news soon reached France; and Charles, prompted by the solicitations of the dutchess of Burgundy,

Burgundy, sent Perkin an invitation to repair to him at Paris. He received him with all the marks of regard due to the duke of York, settled on him a handsome pension, assigned him magnificent lodgings, and gave him a guard for his person. The French courtiers readily embraced a fiction, which their sovereign thought it his interest to adopt; and Perkin, both by his deportment and personal qualities, was well qualified to support the prepossession which was spread abroad of his royal pedigree. From France, the admiration and credulity diffused themselves into England: sir George Nevil, sir John Taylor, and above a hundred gentlemen more, came to Paris, in order to offer their services to the supposed duke of York, and to share his fortunes; and the impostor, having now the appearance of a court attending him, began to fancy himself the character he assumed.

When peace was concluded between France and England, Charles consented to dismiss Perkin, who found refuge with the dutchess of Burgundy. That princess affected to put on the appearance of disgust, and it was not till after a long and severe scrutiny, that she pretended to burst out into joy and admiration, and embraced Perkin as the true image of Edward, and the sole heir of the Plantagenets. Numbers of the English favoured the imposture, among the rest sir Robert Clifford and sir William Stanley.

The king, informed of these particulars, proceeded deliberately, though steadily, in counterworking the projects of his enemies. His first object was to ascertain the death of the real duke of York, and to confirm the opinion that had always prevailed with regard to that catastrophe. Five

Five persons had been employed by Richard, in the murder of his nephews, or could give evidence with regard to it; but as only two of them were now alive, and as the bodies were supposed to have been removed by Richard's orders, from the place where they were first interred, and could not now be found, it was not in Henry's power to establish the fact beyond all doubt and controversy.

He was, however, more successful in detecting who this wonderful person was, who thus advanced pretensions to his crown. He engaged Clifford, who had been admitted into the secret, by the hopes of rewards and pardon, to betray his trust; and such was the diligence of his spies, that in the issue the whole plan of the conspiracy was clearly laid before him, with the pedigree, adventures, life, and conversation of the pretended duke of York; and the latter part of the story was immediately published for the satisfaction of the nation.

Several of the conspirators were immediately arrested. Some of inferior note were rapidly arraigned, convicted, and executed; but more solemnity was necessary in the proceeding against sir William Stanley, one of the most opulent subjects in the kingdom. After six weeks delay, which was interposed, in order to shew that the king was restrained by doubts and scruples, the prisoner was brought to his trial, condemned, and presently after beheaded. Historians, however, are not agreed as to the precise nature of the crime for which he suffered.

The fate of Stanley struck the adherents of Perkin with the deepest dismay; and the impostor, finding his pretensions were becoming obsolete,

obsolete, resolved to attempt something which might revive the hopes and expectation of his partisans. Having collected a band of outlaws, pirates, robbers, and necessitous persons of all nations, to the number of six hundred men, he put to sea, with a resolution of making a descent in England. Information being brought him that the king had made a progress to the north, he cast anchor on the coast of Kent, and sent some of his retainers ashore, who invited the country to join him. The gentlemen of Kent assembled some troops to oppose him; but they purposed to do more essential service, than by repelling the invasion: they carried the semblance of friendship to Perkin, and invited him to come himself ashore, in order to take the command over them. But the wary youth, observing that they had more order and regularity in their movements, than could be supposed in new levied forces who had taken arms against established authority, refused to entrust himself into their hands; and the Kentish troops, despairing of success in their stratagem, fell upon such of his retainers as were already landed; and killing some, took a hundred and fifty prisoners, who were tried and condemned, and executed, by orders from the king.

A. D. 1496. This year a parliament was summoned in England, and another in Ireland. Among other proceedings favourable to the prerogative, the English parliament passed an act, empowering the king to levy, by course of law, all the sums which any person had agreed to pay by way of benevolence: a statute by which that arbitrary method of taxation was indirectly authorised and justified.

In

In Ireland, the king's authority appeared equally prevalent and uncontrolled. Sir Edward Poynings, who had been sent over to that country, with an intention of quelling the partisans of the house of York, and of reducing the natives to subjection, having summoned a parliament at Dublin, he obtained the passing of that memorable statute, which still bears his name, and which, till lately, established the paramount authority of the English government in Ireland. By this statute all the former laws of England were made to be in force in Ireland; and no bill could be introduced into the Irish parliament, unless it had previously received the sanction of the council of England. *

After the retreat of Perkin from the coast of Kent, he sought shelter in Ireland; but tired of the wandering life he was compelled to lead in that country, he passed over to Scotland, where he was well received by James the fourth, and obtained in marriage the lady Catharine Gordon, daughter of the earl of Huntley. The jealousy which subsisted between the courts of England and Scotland, induced the latter to arm in his behalf; but James was soon convinced that the English would never receive a prince from neighbours whom they hated; and perceived that Perkin's pretensions were become stale, even in the eyes of the populace.

To repel the Scots, parliament had granted to Henry a subsidy of one hundred and twenty

* By the act of union, these regulations which were long the object of jealousy and contention, are happily rendered obsolete.

thousand

thousand pounds, with two fifteenths, which heavy imposition excited considerable ill-will, particularly in Cornwall. The people of that county were farther instigated to resistance by one Michael Joseph, a farmer at Bodmin, who, by thrusting himself forward on every occasion, and being loudest in every complaint against the government, had acquired an authority among his townsmen. Thomas Flammoc too, a lawyer, who had become the oracle of the neighbourhood, encouraged the sedition, by informing them that the tax, though imposed by parliament, was entirely illegal; that the northern nobility were bound by their tenures to defend the nation against the Scots; and that the Cornish must deliver to the king a petition, seconded by such a force as would give it authority.

Encouraged by these speeches, the multitude flocked together, and armed themselves with axes, bills, bows, and such weapons as rustics are usually possessed of; and chose Flammoc and Joseph for their leaders. These soon conducted the Cornish through the county of Devon, and reached that of Somerset. At Taunton the rebels killed, in their fury, an officious and eager commissioner of the subsidy; and when they reached Wells, they were joined by lord Audley, a nobleman popular in his department, but vain, ambitious, and restless in his temper. Proud of the countenance given them by so considerable a personage, they continued their march, breathing destruction to the king's ministers and favourites, particularly to Morton, now a cardinal, and sir Reginald Bray, who were deemed the most active instruments of his oppressions. Notwithstanding their rage against the

the administration, as they met with no resistance, they committed neither violence nor disorder during their progress.

Henry, to oppose the Scots, had already levied an army; but though it was an usual saying with him, "that he desired but to see his rebels," it was not until he had selected all his forces that he marched to attack them. They had advanced to the very gates of London; and were formidable from their numbers and their valour; but being ill disciplined, and ill armed, were not a match for the king's troops. After a short resistance, they were broke and put to flight on Blackheath. Lord Audley, Flammoc, and Joseph, their leaders, were taken and executed; but Henry pitying the ignorance and simplicity of the multitude, dismissed them without punishment.

Meanwhile, the Scottish king had laid siege to the castle of Norham in Northumberland; but on the appearance of the earl of Surry, he abandoned the enterprise. A truce was afterwards concluded between the two crowns, and James perceiving that while Perkin remained in Scotland, he should never enjoy a solid peace with Henry, privately desired him to depart.

For some time after quitting Scotland, Perkin concealed himself in the wilds and fastnesses of Ireland. Impatient, however, of this kind of life, he held consultations with his followers, Herne, Skelton, and Astley, three broken tradesmen; and by their advice he resolved to try the affections of the Cornish, whose mutinous disposition, notwithstanding the king's lenity, still subsisted. No sooner did he appear at Bodmin, than the populace, to the number of three thousand.

sand, flocked to his standard; and Perkin, elated with this appearance of success, took on him, for the first time, the appellation of Richard the fourth, king of England. Not to suffer the expectations of his followers to languish, he presented himself before Exeter; and, finding that the inhabitants shut their gates against him, he laid siege to the place; but being unprovided with artillery, ammunition, and every thing requisite for the attempt, he made no progress in his undertaking.

When Henry was informed that Perkin had landed in England, he expressed great joy at his being so near, and prepared himself with alacrity to attack him. The courtiers, sensible that their activity on this occasion would be the most acceptable service which they could render the king, displayed equal zeal for the enterprise, and forwarded his preparations. The lords Daubeney and Broke, with sir Rice ap Thomas, hastened forward with a small body of troops to the relief of Exeter. The earl of Devonshire, and the most considerable gentlemen of the county of that name, took arms of their own accord, and marched to join the king's generals. The duke of Buckingham put himself at the head of a troop, consisting of young nobility and gentry, who served as volunteers; and the king himself prepared to follow with a considerable army.

Perkin, informed of these great preparations, immediately raised the siege of Exeter, and retired to Taunton. Though his followers seemed still resolute to maintain his cause, he himself despaired of success, and secretly withdrew to the sanctuary of Beaulieu in the new forest. The Cornish rebels submitted to the king's mercy,

ey, and found that it was not yet exhausted in their behalf. Except a few persons of desperate fortunes who were executed, and some others who were severely fined, all the rest were dismissed with impunity. Lady Catharine Gordon, wife to Perkin, fell into the hands of the victor, and was treated with a generosity which does him honour. He placed her in a reputable station about the queen, and assigned her a pension, which she enjoyed for her life.

A. D. 1498.

Perkin, being persuaded to quit his sanctuary, on a promise of pardon, was conducted in a kind of mock triumph to London. His confession of his life and adventures was published; but though his life was granted him, he was still detained in custody, and keepers were appointed to guard him. Impatient of confinement, he broke from his keepers, and flying to the sanctuary of Shyne, put himself into the hands of the prior of that monastery, who obtained the king's pardon for his protegé. But in order to reduce him to still greater contempt, he was set in the stocks at Westminster and Cheapside, and obliged in both places to read aloud to the people, the confession which had formerly been published in his name. He was then confined to the tower, where his habits of restless intrigue and enterprise followed him. He insinuated himself into the intimacy of four servants of sir John Digby, lieutenant of the tower; and, by their means, opened a correspondence with the earl of Warwick, who was confined in the same prison. This unfortunate prince, who had from his earliest youth been shut up from the commerce of men, and who was ignorant even of the most common

affairs of life, had fallen into a fatuity, which made him susceptible of any impression. The natural love of liberty, engaged him to embrace a project for his escape, by the murder of the lieutenant; and Perkin offered to conduct the whole enterprise. The conspiracy, however, escaped not the king's vigilance; and Perkin, by this new attempt, having rendered himself totally unworthy of mercy, was arraigned, condemned, and soon after hanged at Tyburn, acknowledging his imposture to the last.

It happened about that very time, that one Wilford, a cordwainer's son, encouraged by the easy credit given to other impostors, had undertaken to personate the earl of Warwick; and a priest had even ventured from the pulpit to recommend his cause to the people. This incident served Henry as a pretence for his severity towards that prince. He was brought to trial, and accused of forming designs to disturb the government, and raise an insurrection among the people. Warwick confessed the indictment, was condemned, and sentence was executed upon him.

This act of tyranny was the capital blemish of Henry's reign; and though he endeavoured to alleviate the odium, by sharing it with his ally, Ferdinand of Arragon, who, he said, scrupled to give his daughter Catharine in marriage to Arthur, while any male descendant of the house of York remained; this only increased the indignation of every generous heart, at seeing an innocent prince sacrificed to the jealous politics of two subtle tyrants.

There was a remarkable similarity of character between these two monarchs; both were full

full of craft, intrigue, and design; and though a resemblance of this nature be a slender foundation for confidence and amity, such was the situation of Henry and Ferdinand, that no jealousy ever arose between them. A marriage, which had been projected and negotiated during the course of seven years, between Arthur prince of Wales, and the infanta Catharine, fourth daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, now took place; but proved in the issue unprosperous. The young prince a few month afters sickened and died, much regretted by the nation; when Henry, desirous to continue his alliance with Spain, and also unwilling to restore Catharine's dowry, which was two hundred thousand ducats, obliged his second son, Henry, whom he created prince of Wales, to be contracted to the infanta, by virtue of a dispensation from the pope.

This marriage, in the event, produced the most important consequences, and the same year another of still greater moment was celebrated, between Margaret, the king's eldest daughter, with James, king of Scotland. By this alliance, which had been negotiated during three years, Henry hoped to remove all source of discord with the neighbouring kingdom. His courtiers, however, were not such good politicians as their master. When some objected, that in consequence of this marriage, England might fall under the dominion of Scotland, Henry replied, "No; Scotland, in that event, will only become an accession to England." Amidst these prosperous incidents, the queen died in child-bed; and the infant did not long survive her. This princess was deservedly the favourite of the na-

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tion; but never seems to have won the affections of her husband.

A.D. 1503. Uncontrolled by apprehension or opposition of any kind, Henry now gave scope to his ruling propensity, and his avarice broke through all restraints. He had found two ministers, Empsom and Dudley, perfectly qualified to second his rapacious and tyrannical inclinations. These instruments of oppression were both lawyers; the first of mean birth, of brutal manners, of unrelenting temper; the second better born, better educated, and better bred, but equally unjust, severe, and inflexible. By their knowledge in law, these men were qualified to pervert the forms of justice to the oppression of the innocent; and the formidable authority of the king supported them in all their iniquities.

In vain did the people look to protection from the parliament: that assembly was so overawed, that during the greatest rage of Henry's oppressions, the commons chose Dudley their speaker, and granted the king what subsidies he demanded; and such were the arts of accumulation of that monarch, that he is said at one time to have possessed the sum of 1,800,000 l. a treasure almost incredible, if we consider the scarcity of specie in those times.

One enemy alone seemed to disturb the domestic tranquillity of the king. Edmund de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, nephew to Edward the fourth, actuated by a restless disposition, had fled into Flanders, and thence attempted to excite new commotions in England; and while Henry was indefatigable in every artifice to seize him,

him, a violent tempest obliged the archduke Philip, who had just succeeded to the crown of Castile, and was passing into Spain, to seek shelter in the harbour of Weymouth. Fatigue and sickness induced him to land; and the king received his guest at Windsor with all possible magnificence. He neglected not, however, the opportunity to complain of the reception which Suffolk had found in his dominions. "I really thought," replied the king of Castile, "that your greatness and felicity had set you far above apprehensions from any person of so little consequence: but, to give you satisfaction, I shall banish him my state." "I expect that you will carry your complaisance farther," said the king; "I desire to have Suffolk put into my hands, where alone I can depend upon his submission and obedience." "That measure," said Philip, "will reflect dishonour upon you as well as myself. You will be thought to have treated me as a prisoner." "Then the matter is at an end," replied the king, "for I will take that dishonour upon me; and so your honour is saved." The king of Castile found himself under the necessity of complying; but he first exacted Henry's promise, that he would spare Suffolk's life.

The king survived this transaction little more than two years. The decline of his health induced him to turn his thoughts towards that future existence, which the iniquities and severities of his reign rendered a very dismal prospect to him. To allay the terrors under which he laboured, he endeavoured, by distributing alms, and founding religious houses, to make atonement for his crimes, and to purchase, by the sacrifice

crifice of part of his ill-gotten treasures, a reconciliation with his offended Maker. Remorse even seized him, at intervals, for the abuse of his authority by Empson and Dudley; but not sufficiently to make him stop the rapacious hand of those oppressors. Amidst the most scandalous exactions, which he either sanctioned or tolerated, Henry was surprised by the near approach of death, when, by a general clause in his will, he ordered that restitution should be made to all those whom he had injured. He died of a consumption, at his favourite palace of Richmond, after a reign of twenty-three years and eight months, and in the fifty-second year of his age.

A. D. 1509.

The reign of Henry, on the whole, was fortunate for his people at home, and honourable abroad. He loved peace without fearing war, and this acquired the regard and consideration of foreign princes. His capacity was excellent, though somewhat contracted by the narrowness of his heart: avarice was his ruling passion; and he gratified it at the expence of every honourable principle, which should bind even the lowest ranks of men.

There scarcely passed any session during this reign, without some statute against engaging retainers, a practice by which they were enlisted under some great lord, and were kept in readiness to assist him in all his violences. There is a story of Henry's severity against this abuse; and it seems to merit praise, though it favoured his avarice and rapacity. The earl of Oxford, his favourite general, having splendidly entertained him at his castle at Heningham, was desirous of making a parade of his magnificence, at

at the departure of his royal guest; and ordered all his retainers, with their liveries and badges, to be drawn up in two lines, that their appearance might be the more gallant and splendid. "My lord," said the king, "I have heard much of your hospitality; but the truth far exceeds the report. These handsome gentlemen and yeomen, whom I see on both sides of me, are no doubt your menial servants." The earl smiled, and confessed that his fortune was too narrow for such magnificence. "They are most of them," subjoined he, "my retainers, who are come to do me service at this time, when they know I am honoured with your majesty's presence." The king started a little, and said, "By my faith, my lord, I thank you for your good cheer, but I must not allow my laws to be broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you." Oxford is said to have paid no less than fifteen thousand marks, as a composition for his offence.

But the most important law in its consequences, which was enacted during the reign of Henry, was that by which the nobility and gentry acquired a power of breaking the ancient entails, and of alienating their estates. By means of this law, joined to the beginning luxury and refinement of the age, the great fortunes of the barons were gradually dissipated, and the property of the commons increased in England. It is probable that Henry foresaw and intended this consequence; because the constant scheme of his policy consisted in depressing the great, and exalting churchmen, lawyers, and men of new families, in hopes they would be more obsequious.

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It was during this reign, that Columbus discovered America. That great man, after numerous repulses from the courts of Portugal and Spain, sent his brother Bartholomew to London, in order to explain his project to Henry, and crave his patronage. The king invited him over to England; but his brother being taken by pirates, was detained in his voyage, and Columbus, meanwhile, having obtained the countenance of Isabella, was supplied with a small fleet, and happily executed his enterprise. Henry, not discouraged by this disappointment, fitted out Sebastian Cabot, a Venetian, settled at Bristol, and sent him westward, in 1498, in search of new countries. Cabot discovered the main land of America, towards the sixtieth degree of northern latitude, as well as Newfoundland, and other countries; but returned to England without making any conquest or settlement. Elliot, and other merchants in Bristol, made a like attempt in 1502. The king expended fourteen thousand pounds in building one ship, called the "Great Harry;" which was, properly speaking, the first ship in the English navy. Before this period, when the prince wanted a fleet, he had no other expedient than hiring or pressing merchants vessels.

But though this improvement of navigation, and the discovery of both the Indies, will for ever render the age of Henry memorable; other important events take their rise near the same period. In 1453, Constantinople was taken by the Turks; and the Greeks, among whom some remains of learning were still preserved, being scattered by these barbarians, took shelter in Italy, and imported, together with their admira-

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ble language, a tincture of their science, and of their refined taste in poetry and eloquence. About the same time, the purity of the Latin tongue was revived, and the art of printing, then recently invented, extremely facilitated the progress of all these improvements. The whole art of war too, was changed by the introduction of gunpowder and artillery; and mighty innovations were soon after made in religion, such as not only affected those states that embraced them, but even those that adhered to the ancient faith and worship. Thus a general revolution was produced in human affairs, about this period; and men gradually entered on that career of commerce, arts, government, and police, in which, with some pauses and exceptions, they have ever since been persevering.

CHAP. X.

The Reign of Henry VIII.

THE accession of Henry the eighth spread universal joy and satisfaction. Instead of a monarch, jealous, severe, and avaricious, a young and graceful prince of eighteen, had succeeded to the throne, who, even in the eyes of men of sense, gave promising hopes of his future conduct, much more in those of the people, always inchanted with novelty, and royal dignity. Hitherto, he had been occupied entirely in the pursuits of literature and manly exercises; and the proficiency which he made in each, gave no bad prognostic

A. D. 1509.

prognostic of his parts and capacity. Even the vices of vehemence, ardour, and impatience, to which he was subject, and which afterwards degenerated into tyranny, were considered only as faults incident to unguarded youth, which would be corrected by time. And as the contending titles of York and Lancaster were now at last fully united in his person, men justly expected from a prince, obnoxious to no party, that impartiality of administration which had long been unknown in England.

These favourable prepossessions were encouraged by the early measures which Henry embraced; his council was composed of men who had been accustomed to business, but who were the least unpopular. The earl of Surry, and Fox, bishop of Winchester, were the chief competitors for his favour. The former, with the address of a courtier, promoted that taste for pleasure and magnificence which now began to prevail. The vast treasures amassed by the late king were gradually dissipated in the giddy expences of Henry; or if he intermitted the course of his festivity, he chiefly employed himself in an application to music and literature, which were his favourite pursuits, and which were well adapted to his genius. And though he was so unfortunate as to be seduced into a study of the barren controversies of the schools, which were then fashionable, he still discovered a capacity fitted for more useful and elegant acquirements.

The execution of Empson and Dudley was rather a sacrifice to public opinion than to justice; yet while Henry punished the instruments of past tyranny, he paid such deference to for-

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mer engagements, as to celebrate his marriage with the infanta Catherine, though her former marriage with his brother was urged by the primate as an important objection.

It was at this period, when the situation of the different monarchies of Europe promised, by balancing each other, a long tranquillity, that the flames of war were kindled by Julius II. an ambitious and enterprising pontiff, who determining to expel all principles from Italy, chiefly with a view to Lewis of France, drew over Ferdinand to his party; and solicited the favour of England by sending Henry a sacred rose, perfumed with musk, and anointed with schism. He likewise gave him hopes that the title of most Christian King, which had hitherto been annexed to the crown of France, should be annexed to that of England; and Henry, allured by this expectation, and impatient to distinguish himself in arms, joined the alliance, which the pope, in conjunction with Spain and Venice, had formed against the French monarch.

Instead of invading France, however, by the way of Calais, Henry was prevailed on by Ferdinand to send forces under the marquis of Dorset, to Fontarabia, whence it was insinuated that he could easily make conquest of Guienne, a province in which it was imagined the English had still some adherents. But he discovered too late the artifice of Ferdinand, who, instead of seconding the English in their enterprises on Guienne, was only anxious to secure to himself the small kingdom of Navarre. In this design Dorset refused to concur; and soon after reimbarked his troops for England,

A. D. 1513.

England, where he appeased his sovereign by disclosing to him the perfidious conduct of his ally.

The war which England now waged against France, though it brought no advantage to the former kingdom, was of great prejudice to the latter; and obliged Lewis, for the defence of his own dominions, to abandon his conquests in Italy. The extreme joy of Julius on this event proved fatal to his life; and he was succeeded by Leo X. one of the most illustrious princes that ever wore the tiara. He was beneficent, generous, affable; the patron of every art, and the friend of every virtue. He had a soul no less capable of forming great designs than his predecessor, but was more gentle, pliant, and artful in employing means for their execution. By the negotiations of Leo, the emperor Maximilian was detached from the French interest; and Henry, notwithstanding his disappointments in the former campaign, was still encouraged to prosecute his warlike measures against Lewis.

To forward his enterprises, parliament had granted a poll tax, which was levied in proportion to the station and riches of the person. A duke paid ten marks, an earl five pounds, a baron four pounds, a knight four marks; and every man valued at eight hundred pounds in goods, four marks. An imposition was also granted of two fifteenths and four tenths. By these supplies, joined to the treasure which had been left by his father, and which was not yet entirely dissipated, he was enabled to levy a great army, and render himself formidable to his enemy.

In order to prevent all disturbances from Scotland, while Henry's arms should be employed

ployed on the continent, Dr. West, dean of Windsor, was dispatched on an embassy to James, the king's brother-in-law; and instructions were given him to accommodate all differences between the kingdoms, as well as to sound the intentions of the court of Scotland. Some complaints had already been made on both sides. One Barton, a Scotchman, having suffered injuries from the Portuguese, for which he could obtain no redress, had procured letters of marque against that nation; but he had no sooner put to sea, than he was guilty of the grossest abuses, and committed many depredations upon the English. Lord Howard, and sir Edward Howard, admirals, sons of the earl of Surry, sailing out against him, fought him in a desperate action, where the pirate was killed; and they brought his ships into the Thames. As Henry refused all satisfaction for this act of justice, some of the borderers, who wanted but a pretence for depredations, entered England under the command of lord Hume, warden of the marches, and laid waste the frontiers. Notwithstanding these mutual grounds of dissatisfaction, matters might easily have been accommodated, had it not been for Henry's intended invasion of France, which roused the jealousy of the Scottish nation. The ancient league, which subsisted between France and Scotland, was conceived to be the strongest band of connexion; and James was farther inticed to take part in the quarrel by the invitations of Anne, queen of France, whose knight he had ever in all tournaments professed himself, and who summoned him, according to the ideas of romantic gallantry, prevalent in that age, to take the field

in her defence, and prove himself her true and valorous champion. The remonstrances of his consort, and of his wisest counsellors, were in vain opposed to the martial ardour of this prince. He first sent a squadron of ships to the assistance of France; the only fleet which Scotland seems ever to have possessed; and, though he still made professions of maintaining a neutrality, the English ambassador easily foresaw, and gave warning of the danger to his master.

Henry, ardent for military fame, was little discouraged by this appearance of a diversion from the north; and he had now got a minister who flattered him in every scheme to which his impetuous temper inclined. Thomas Wolsey, dean of Lincoln, and almoner to the king, surpassed in favour all his ministers, and was fast advancing towards that unrivalled grandeur, which he afterwards attained. This man was son of a butcher at Ipswich; but having obtained a learned education, and being endowed with an excellent capacity, he was admitted into the marquis of Dorset's family as tutor to that nobleman's children, and soon gained the friendship and countenance of his patron. He was recommended to be chaplain to Henry VII. and being employed by that monarch in some secret negotiations, acquitted himself with so much address, that he was universally considered as a rising man at court. The death of the king, however, for a while retarded his advancement; and he might have been forgotten, had not Fox bishop of Winchester cast his eye upon him, as one who might be serviceable to him in his present situation. This prelate, observing that the earl of Surry had totally eclipsed him in favour,

favour, resolved to introduce Wolsey to the young prince's familiarity, and hoped that he might rival Surry in his insinuating arts, and yet be contented to act in the cabinet a part subordinate to his patron and promoter. In a little time, however, Wolsey gained so much on the king, that he supplanted both Surry in his favour and Fox in his trust and confidence. Being admitted to Henry's parties of pleasure, he took the lead in every jovial conversation, and promoted all that frolic and entertainment which he found suitable to the age and inclination of the young monarch. Neither his own years, which were near forty, nor his character of a clergyman, were any restraint upon him, or engaged him to check, by any useless severity, the gaiety, in which Henry passed his careless hours. During the intervals of amusement, he introduced business, and insinuated those maxims of conduct which he was desirous his master should adopt. He insinuated to him, that, while he entrusted his affairs into the hands of his father's counsellors, he had the advantage indeed of employing men of wisdom and experience, but men who owed not their promotion to his favour, and who scarcely thought themselves accountable to him for the exercise of their authority; that while he thought proper to pass his time in those pleasures, to which his age and royal fortune invited him, and in those studies, which would in time enable him to sway the sceptre with absolute authority, his best system of government, would be to entrust his authority into the hands of some one person, who was the creature of his will, and who could

entertain no view but that of promoting his service.

In fact, Wolsey was only studious to recommend himself; and Henry finding no one so capable of executing this plan of administration as the person who proposed it, he soon advanced his favourite, from being the companion of his pleasures, to be a member of his council; and from being a member of his council, to be his sole and absolute minister. By this rapid advancement and uncontrolled authority, the character and genius of Wolsey had full opportunity to display itself. Insatiable in his acquisitions, but still more magnificent in his expence; of extensive capacity, but still more unbounded enterprise; ambitious of power, but still more desirous of glory; insinuating, engaging, persuasive; and, by turns, lofty, elevated, commanding; haughty to his equals, but affable to his dependants: oppressive to the people, but liberal to his friends; more generous than grateful; less moved by injuries than by contempt; he was framed to take the ascendant in every intercourse with others, but exerted this superiority of nature with such ostentation as exposed him to envy, and made every one willing to recall the original inferiority of his condition.

Henry, finding Lewis had made great preparations by sea, equipped a considerable fleet, and entrusted the command of it to the brave but rash sir Edward Howard, who with only two gallies attacked, near Brest, six French gallies, secured by batteries. Howard immediately fastened on the French admiral's ship, and

and leaped on board her, attended by a Spanish cavalier, and seventeen Englishmen. Meanwhile, the cable which fastened his ship to that of the enemy being cut, the admiral was thus left in the hands of the French; and as he still continued the combat with great gallantry, he was pushed overboard by their pikes; and the fleet, discouraged by the loss of their commander, quitted their station.

In the mean time, Henry, having levied a numerous army, prepared to pass over to Calais, appointing the queen regent during his absence; and to secure her administration from all disturbance, he ordered Edmond de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, who had been attainted in the late reign, to be executed. In his expedition, he was accompanied by the duke of Buckingham, and many of the nobility: but of the allies, on whose assistance he relied, the Swiss alone performed their engagements, and invaded France. Maximilian, instead of reinforcing the latter with eight thousand men, joined the English army with a few German and Flemish soldiers; and observing the disposition of the English monarch to be more bent on glory than on interest, he inlisted himself into his service, and received an hundred crowns a-day as one of his subjects and captains, though, in fact, he directed the whole operations of the English army.

Terouane, a town situated on the frontiers of Picardy, was reduced to the last extremity, when eight hundred horsemen, each of whom carried a sack of gunpowder behind him, and two quarters of bacon, broke through the lines of the besiegers, deposited their burden in the town,

town, and forced their way back before the English were collected to surround them.

But the English had, soon after, full revenge for the insult. Henry had received intelligence of the approach of the French horse, who had advanced to protect another incursion of Fontrailles; and he ordered some troops to pass the Lis, in order to oppose him. The cavalry of France, though they consisted chiefly of gentlemen who had behaved with great gallantry in many desperate actions in Italy, were, on sight of the enemy, seized with so unaccountable a panic, that they immediately took to flight, and were pursued by the English. The duke of Longueville, who commanded the French, and many other officers of distinction, were made prisoners. This action, or rather rout, is commonly called the "Battle of Spurs," because the French, that day, made more use of their spurs, than of their swords or military weapons.

Instead of pursuing this victory, the king returned to the siege of Terouane, which soon after was obliged to capitulate. He next, at the instance of Maximilian, invested Tournay, and that city also surrendered in a few days. The bishop of that see being lately dead, the king bestowed the administration of it on his favourite Wolsey, and put him in immediate possession of the revenues, which were considerable. Hearing of the retreat of the Swiss, and observing the season to be far advanced, he now thought proper to return to England; and carried the greater part of his army with him. Success had attended him in every enterprise; and his youthful mind was much elated with this seeming pros-

prosperity; but all men of judgment, comparing the advantages of his situation with his progress, his expense with his acquisitions, were convinced that this campaign was, in reality, both ruinous and inglorious to him.

In the north, Henry's arms were even more successful: the king of Scotland with an army of fifty thousand men, after ravaging the frontiers of Northumberland, had encamped on some high ground, near the hills of Cheviot, with twenty-six thousand disciplined troops. The earl of Surry advancing towards the invaders, by a feigned march towards Berwick, induced the Scottish army to descend from the hills to Flouden field; and, as an engagement was now become inevitable, both sides prepared for it with tranquillity and order. The English divided their army into two lines: lord Howard led the main body of the first line, sir Edmond Howard the right wing, sir Marmaduke Constable the left. The earl of Surry himself commanded the main body of the second line, lord Dacres the right wing, sir Edward Stanley the left. The front of the Scots presented three divisions to the enemy: the middle was led by the king himself; the right by the earl of Huntly, assisted by lord Hume; the left by the earls of Lenox and Argyle. A fourth division, under the earl of Bothwel, made a body of reserve. A furious battle commenced, which was continued, till night separated the combatants. The victory seemed yet undecided, and the numbers that fell on each side were nearly equal; but the morning discovered where the advantage lay. The English had lost only persons of small note; but the flower of the Scottish nobility had fallen in battle,

battle, and their king himself, after the most diligent inquiry, could no where be found. In searching the field, however, the English met with a dead body which resembled him, and was arrayed in a similar habit; and they put it in a leaden coffin, and sent it to London. During some time, it was kept unburied; because James died under sentence of excommunication, on account of his confederacy with France, and his opposition to the holy see; but upon Henry's application, who pretended that this prince had, in the instant before his death, discovered signs of repentance, absolution was given him, and his body was interred. The Scots, however, still asserted that it was not James's body which was found in the field of battle, but that of one Elphinston, who had been arrayed in arms resembling their king's, in order to divide the attention of the English, and share the danger of his master. It was believed, that James had been seen crossing the Tweed at Kelso; and some imagined that he had been killed by the vassals of lord Hume. But the populace long entertained the opinion that he was still alive, and having secretly gone in pilgrimage to the Holy Land, would return again, and take possession of the throne.

The king of Scotland, and most of his chief nobles, being slain in the field of Floudon, an inviting opportunity was offered to Henry, of humbling that kingdom in the dust: but he discovered on this occasion a mind truly great and generous. When the queen of Scotland, Margaret, who was created regent during the infancy of her son, applied for peace, he readily accorded it; and compassionated the helpless condition

condition of his sister and nephew. The earl of Surry, who had gained him so great a victory, was restored to the title of duke of Norfolk, which had been forfeited by his father, for engaging on the side of Richard the third; and among other promotions, Wolsey, who was both his favourite and his minister, was created bishop of Lincoln.

A. D. 1514.

Peace with Scotland enabled Henry to direct his whole attention to the enterprise against France; but several incidents opened his eyes to the rashness of the undertaking. The pope, unwilling to push the French to extremities, had taken off the sentence of excommunication. Ferdinand, flattered with the hope of obtaining the second daughter of the French king, with the dutchy of Milan in dowry, for one of his family, had not only agreed to a truce for a year, but engaged Maximilian in the treaty; and Henry could not but be inspired with resentment towards those who had imposed on his inexperience, and abused his too great facility.

The duke of Longueville, who had been made prisoner at Guinegate, was ready to take advantage of this disposition. He represented, that as Lewis was a widower without male children, no marriage could be more suitable to him, than that with the princess Mary, the sister of Henry. The king seemed to hearken to this discourse with willing ears. Longueville then informed his master of the probability which he discovered of bringing the matter to a happy conclusion; and received full powers for negotiating the treaty. The articles were easily adjusted between the monarchs; and instead of open enmity,

mity, they were engaged in a defensive alliance, in case either should be attacked.

The espousals of Mary and Lewis were soon after celebrated at Abbeville; but the monarch, seduced by the beauty of his young queen, into a course of pleasure, very unsuitable to his constitution, died three months after the marriage. He was succeeded by Francis, duke of Angoulême, a youth of one and twenty, who had married the eldest daughter of Lewis. When this happened, Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, the most comely personage of his time, and the most accomplished in all the exercises which were then thought to befit the courtier and a soldier, was at the court of France. He was such a favourite with Henry, that he once thought of marrying him to his sister Mary, who now asked Suffolk, whether he had the courage, without farther reflection, to espouse her? telling him, that her brother would more easily forgive him for not asking his consent, than for acting contrary to his orders. Suffolk declined not so inviting an offer; and their nuptials were secretly celebrated at Paris. Francis, who was pleased with this marriage, as it prevented Henry from forming any powerful alliance by means of his sister, interposed his good offices in appeasing him; and even Wolsey, having entertained no jealousy of Suffolk, was active in reconciling the king to his sister and brother-in-law.

A. D. 1515.

Wolsey's sudden elevation, and his haughty deportment, tended to disgust the nation, while it rivetted him faster in Henry's confidence, who valued himself on the choice he had made. He preferred him to the archbishopric of York, and allowed

allowed him to unite with it the sees of Durham and of Winchester; while the pope, observing his influence over the king, created him a cardinal. His train consisted of eight hundred servants, of whom many were knights and gentlemen; and whoever was distinguished by any art or science, paid court to the cardinal; and none paid court in vain. Literature, which was then in its infancy, found in him a generous patron; and both by his public institutions and private bounty, he gave encouragement to every branch of erudition. Not content, however, with this munificence, which gained him the approbation of the wise, he strove to dazzle the eyes of the populace, by the splendour of his equipage and furniture, the rich embroidery of his liveries, and the costliness of his apparel.

Warham, chancellor, and archbishop of Canterbury, a man of a moderate temper, and averse to all disputes, chose rather to retire from public employment, than maintain an unequal contest with the haughty cardinal. Accordingly, he resigned his office of chancellor; and the great seal was immediately delivered to Wolsey. If this new accumulation of dignity increased his enemies, it also served to exalt his personal character, and prove the extent of his capacity. No chancellor ever discovered greater impartiality in his decisions, deeper penetration of judgment, or more enlarged knowledge of law and equity.

The tranquillity of domestic affairs rendered Henry more attentive to the state of Scotland. The late king of Scotland had left his widow regent, on the condition of her remaining unmarried. Only a few months, however, had elapsed, before she espoused the earl of Angus; and,

and, though a part of the nobility proposed electing Angus to the regency, some of the most powerful of the Scottish chieftains insisted on raising to this dignity, the duke of Albany, son to a brother of James the third, and first prince of the blood, which proposition was carried.

During these transactions, Francis the first had penetrated into Italy, and, gaining the bloody battle of Marignan, had conquered Milan. His success and glory excited the emulation of Henry; but the situation of the other powers of Europe was far from favourable to his views; Ferdinand, his father-in-law, who had often deceived him, was declining through age and infirmities; and a speedy period was looked for to the long and prosperous reign of that great monarch. Charles prince of Spain, sovereign of the Low Countries, desired nothing but peace with Francis, who had it so much in his power, if provoked, to obstruct his peaceable accession to that rich inheritance which was awaiting him.

A. D. 1516. At length, the death of Ferdinand the Catholic devolved on his grandson Charles his extensive dominions; and the more the latter advanced in power, the more Francis was sensible of the necessity of gaining Henry. He had hitherto slighted Wolsey; but he now courted him with the most assiduous flattery; and it was not long before he found the good effects of his policy.

A treaty was soon concluded between Henry and Francis, for the cession of Tournay to the latter; and in order to give this sacrifice a more graceful appearance, it was agreed that the dauphin and princess Mary, both of them infants, should

should be betrothed, and that this city should be considered as the dowry of the princess. Such kinds of agreement were then common among sovereigns, though it was very rare that the interests and views of the parties continued so steady as to render the intended marriages effectual. But as Henry had been at considerable expence, in building a citadel at Tournay, Francis agreed to pay him six hundred thousand crowns, at twelve annual payments, and to put into his hands eight hostages, all of them men of quality, for the performance of the article: and lest the cardinal should think himself neglected in these stipulations, Francis promised him a yearly pension of twelve thousand livres, as an equivalent of the administration of the bishopric of Tournay.

The title of legate, which was about this time conferred on Wolsey, brought with it a great accession of power and dignity. He erected a court, which he invested with a kind of inquisitorial and censorial powers, even over the laity; and directed it to inquire into all actions, which, though they escaped the law, might appear contrary to good morals. The abuse of this court, however, at length reached the king's ears, and he expressed such displeasure to the cardinal, as made him ever after more cautious in his proceedings.

While Henry, indulging himself in pleasure and amusement, entrusted the government of his kingdom to this imperious minister, an accident happened abroad, which excited his attention. Maximilian, the emperor, died; a man who, of himself, was indeed of little consequence: but as his death left A. D. 1511.

 vacant

vacant the first station among christian princes, it set the passions of men in agitation, and proved a kind of æra in the general system of Europe. The kings of France and Spain immediately declared themselves candidates for the imperial crown, and employed every expedient of money or intrigue, which promised them success in so great a point of ambition. Henry also was encouraged to advance his pretensions; but soon found that he had commenced his canvass too late.

Francis and Charles professed from the beginning to carry on this rivalship without enmity; but all men apprehended that this moderation would not be of long duration; and when Charles prevailed, Francis could not help severely feeling his disappointment in so important a pretension. Both of them were princes endowed with talents and abilities; brave, aspiring, active, warlike; beloved by their servants and subjects, dreaded by their enemies, and respected by all the world: Francis, open, frank, liberal, munificent, carrying these virtues to an excess which prejudiced his affairs: Charles, political, close, artful, frugal; better qualified to obtain success in wars and in negotiations, especially the latter. The one the more amiable man; the other the greater monarch. And as the personal qualities of these princes thus counterpoised each other, so did the advantages and disadvantages of their dominions. Fortune alone, without the concurrence of prudence or valour, never reared up, of a sudden, so great a power as that which centered in the emperor Charles. He reaped the succession of Castile, of Arragon, of Austria, of the Netherlands; he inherited the conquest

conquest of Naples, of Granada; election entitled him to the empire; even the bounds of the globe seemed to be enlarged a little before his time, that he might possess the whole treasure, as yet entire and unrifled, of the new world. But though the concurrence of all these advantages formed an empire, greater and more extensive than any known in Europe since that of the Romans, the kingdom of France alone, being close, compact, united, rich, populous, and interposed between the provinces of the emperor's dominions, was able to make a vigorous opposition to his progress, and to maintain the conquest against him.

It was Henry's felicity to be able, both by the native force of his kingdom and its situation, to hold the balance between those two powers. But he was heedless, inconsiderate, capricious, and impolitic. Francis, well acquainted with his character, had solicited an interview near Calais, in hopes of being able by familiar conversation to gain upon his confidence. The proposal was seconded by Wolsey; and, as Henry loved show and magnificence, he cheerfully adjusted the preliminaries of the interview.

A. D. 1520.

But while Henry was preparing to depart for Calais, he heard the emperor was arrived at Dover. That great prince and politician, apprehensive of the meeting between Francis and Henry, resolved to make the latter an higher compliment, by paying him a visit in his own dominions. He here instilled into Wolsey the hope of attaining the papacy; and in confidence of reaching this dignity,

dignity, the cardinal secretly devoted himself to the interests of Charles.

The day of Charles's departure, Henry passed over to Calais, with his queen and court. The two monarchs met in a field within the English pale, between Guisnes and Ardres; and such was their profusion as procured to the place the name of the field of the *Cloth of Gold.* Henry proposed to make some amendments on the articles of their former alliance; and he began to read the treaty, *I Henry, King*; these were the first words; and he stopped a moment. He subjoined only the words *of England*, without adding *France*, the usual style of the English monarchs. Francis remarked this delicacy, and expressed by a smile his approbation of it.

This compliment was soon repaid by Francis. That generous prince, shocked at the precautions which were observed, whenever he had an interview with the English monarch, in order to break off this tedious ceremonial, took with him two gentlemen and a page, and rode directly into Guisnes. The guards were surprised at the presence of the monarch, who called aloud to them, "You are all my prisoners; carry me to your master." Henry was equally astonished at the appearance of Francis; and taking him in his arms, "My brother," said he, "you have here played me the most agreeable trick in the world, and have showed me the full confidence I may place in you: I surrender myself your prisoner from this moment." He took from his neck a collar of pearls worth fifteen thousand angels; and putting it about Francis's,

Francis's, begged him to wear it for the sake of his prisoner. Francis agreed, but on condition that Henry should wear a bracelet, of which he made him a present, and which was double in value to the collar. The king went next day to Ardres, without guards or attendants; and confidence being now fully established between the monarchs, they employed the rest of the time entirely in tournaments and festivals.

When Henry took leave of Francis, he paid a visit to the emperor and Margaret of Savoy at Gravelines, and the artful Charles completed the impression which he had begun to make on Henry and his favourite. He renewed assurances of assisting the latter in obtaining the papacy; and even put him in immediate possession of the revenues belonging to the sees of Badajox and Placentia.

The violent personal emulation between the emperor and the French king soon broke out in hostilities. Henry, who pretended to be neutral, engaged them to send their ambassadors to Calais, there to negotiate a peace under the mediation of Wolsey and the pope's nuncio. The emperor was well apprised of the partiality of these mediators; and his demands in the conference were so unreasonable, as plainly proved him conscious of the advantage. On Francis's rejecting the terms proposed, the congress of Calais broke up, and Wolsey, soon after, took a journey to Bruges, where he met with the emperor. He was received with the same state, magnificence, and respect, as if he had been the king of England himself; and he concluded, in his master's name, an offensive alliance with the pope and the emperor against France, on conditions

conditions the most preposterous and extravagant, which plainly evinced the influence of private views in the cardinal, whose authority was now unbounded.

The duke of Buckingham, having given disgust to the cardinal by several reflections on the expensive interview at Guisnes, and having farther by his rashness and levity incurred the king's highest displeasure, was brought to a trial; and the duke of Norfolk, whose son, the earl of Surry, had married Buckingham's daughter, was created lord steward, in order to preside at this solemn procedure. The jury consisted of a duke, a marquis, seven earls, and twelve barons; and they gave their verdict against Buckingham, which was soon after carried into execution.

From this tragical scene, the minds of the English were diverted to other events, which indeed engrossed the attention of the greater part of Europe. Leo X. by his generous and enterprising temper, having exhausted his treasury, in order to replenish it, had recourse to the sale of indulgences. The produce of this revenue, particularly that which arose from Saxony, and the countries bordering on the Baltic, was farmed out to an Italian merchant. The scandal of this transaction, with the licentious lives which the collectors are reported to have led, roused Martin Luther, a professor of the university of Wittemberg, who not only decried the indulgences themselves, but was thence carried by the heat of dispute to question the authority of the pope. Finding his opinions greedily hearkened to, he promulgated them both by writing and discourse; and in a short time,

time, all Europe was filled with the voice of this daring innovator.

As there subsisted in England some remains of the Lollards, the doctrines of Luther secretly gained there many partisans; but Henry had been educated in a strict attachment to the church of Rome, and therefore opposed the progress of the Lutheran tenets, by all the influence which his extensive and almost absolute authority conferred upon him. He even wrote a book in Latin against the principles of Luther; a performance which, if allowance be made for the subject and the age, does no discredit to his talents. He sent a copy of it to Leo, who received so magnificent a present with great testimony of regard; and conferred on him the title of *Defender of the Faith*; an appellation still retained by the kings of England. Luther, who was in the heat of controversy, soon published an answer to Henry; and, without regard to the dignity of his antagonist, treated him with all the acrimony of style to which in the course of his polemics he had so long been accustomed. The king by this ill usage was still more prejudiced against the new doctrines; but the public, who naturally favour the weaker party, were inclined to attribute to Luther the victory in the dispute: and as the controversy now became more illustrious, his tenets daily acquired new converts, in every part of Europe.

Leo X. whose improvidence had given rise to this sect, died in the flower of his age, a little after he received the king's book against Luther; and was succeeded in the papal chair by Adrian, a Fleming, who had been tutor to the emperor Charles. The latter, who knew that Wolsey

Wolsey had received a disappointment in his ambitious hopes by the election of Adrian, and who dreaded the resentment of that haughty minister, was solicitous to repair the breach made in their friendship by this incident. He paid another visit to England; and besides flattering the vanity of the king and the cardinal, he renewed to Wolsey all the promises which he had made him, of seconding his pretensions to the papal throne. Wolsey, sensible that Adrian's great age and infirmities promised a speedy vacancy, dissembled his resentment, and was willing to hope for a more prosperous issue to the next election. The emperor renewed the treaty made at Bruges, to which some articles were added; and he agreed to indemnify both the king and Wolsey for the revenue which they should lose by a proposed breach with France, which soon after took place, without any consistent reason.

War being declared, Surry landed some troops at Cherbourg in Normandy; and after laying waste the country, he sailed to Morlaix, a rich town in Brittany, which he took and plundered. Surry then left the charge of the fleet to the vice-admiral, and sailing to Calais, took the command of the English army, destined for the invasion of France.

A. D. 1522. The French were, however, too prudent to hazard a general engagement, and Surry having drawn together his forces, invested Hedin; the siege of which he was obliged to raise, and put his troops into winter-quarters about the end of October. His rear guard was attacked at Pas in Artois, and five or six hundred men were cut off; nor could

all

all his efforts make him master of one place within the French frontier.

The allies, however, were more successful in Italy, where the French lost the bloody battle of Bicocca; but on the side of Scotland, though the regent Albany, firm to his engagements with France, prevailed on his countrymen to take arms against England, they obstinately refused to pass the borders. Albany observing their discontent, withdrew to France; and in his absence, Surry ravaged the Merse and Teviotdale, and burned the town of Jedburg. The king of England, who knew the distressed situation of the Scots, wished to allure them to a solemn renunciation of their alliance with France, by the hopes of contracting a marriage between the lady Mary, heiress of England, and their young monarch: but the return of the regent broke this project; and by the authority of the states, he assembled an army, with a view of avenging the ravages committed by the English, in the beginning of the campaign; and he led them southwards towards the borders. Hearing, however, that the English were approaching, and discouraged by the advanced season, he thought proper to disband his forces, and retire to Edinburgh. Soon after, he went over to France, and never again returned to Scotland. The Scottish nation, agitated by their domestic factions, were not during several years in a condition to give any more disturbance to England; and Henry had full leisure to prosecute his designs on the continent.

The war with France, however, proceeded slowly for want of money. Henry had caused

a general

a general survey to be made of his kingdom, and had issued his privy seal to the most wealthy, demanding loans of particular sums: he soon after published an edict for a general tax upon his subjects, which he still called a loan; and he levied five shillings in the pound upon the clergy, and two upon the laity. The parliament, which was summoned about this time, was far from complaining of these illegal measures; more tenacious, however, of their money than their national privileges, the commons refused the demand of the king of eight hundred thousand pounds, divided into four yearly payments; a sum computed to be equal to four shillings in the pound of one year's revenue; and they only voted an imposition of three shillings in the pound, on all possessed of fifty pounds a year and upwards; of two shillings on those possessed of twenty and upwards; one shilling on all who enjoyed between twenty pounds and forty shillings a year; and on the other subjects above sixteen years of age, a groat a head. The king was so dissatisfied with this saving disposition of the commons, that, as he had not called a parliament during seven years before, he allowed seven more to elapse before he summoned another: and on pretence of necessity, he levied in one year, from all who were worth forty pounds, what the parliament had granted him, payable in four years. These irregularities were commonly ascribed to the cardinal's counsels, who, trusting to the protection afforded him by his ecclesiastical character, was the less scrupulous in his encroachments on the civil rights of the nation.

Soon after, the ambitious prelate received a

new

new mortification. The pope Adrian the sixth died; and Clement the seventh, of the family of Medicis, was elected in his place, by the concurrence of the imperial party. Wolsey could now perceive the insincerity of the emperor; but concealed his disgust, and after congratulating the new pope on his promotion, applied for a continuation of the legatine powers, which the two former popes had conferred upon him. Clement, knowing the importance of gaining his friendship, granted him a commission for life; and, by this unusual concession, he in a manner transferred to him the whole papal authority in England. In some particulars, Wolsey made a good use of this extensive power. He erected two colleges, one at Oxford, another at Ipswich, the place of his nativity: he sought, all over Europe, for learned men to supply the chairs of these colleges; and, in order to bestow endowments on them, he suppressed some smaller monasteries, and distributed the monks into other convents.

The war with France yet hung in suspense; and it was from the treason of Charles duke of Bourbon, constable of France, that the allies expected the most brilliant success. That prince, under pretence of a law-suit, being deprived of his ample possessions, and provoked at this injustice, had entered into a secret correspondence with the emperor and the king of England. While Francis was absent in Italy, Bourbon proposed to raise an insurrection among his numerous vassals: but the French king got intimation of his design; and Bourbon was forced to seek shelter in the emperor's court, where he employed

ployed his great talents for war, to the prejudice of his native country.

The king of England had awaited the event of this conspiracy; and it was not till late in the season, that the duke of Suffolk passed over to Calais, and took the field with twelve thousand men; these were joined by an equal number of Flemings; but he performed nothing worthy recording.

A. D. 1524. A new treaty was soon after concluded between Henry and Charles, for the invasion of France. Charles stipulated to supply the duke of Bourbon with a powerful army, in order to conquer Provence and Dauphiny, which he was to possess, with the title of king; but to hold them in fee of Henry, as king of France. The dutchy of Burgundy was to be given to Charles; the rest of the kingdom to Henry.

This chimerical partition immediately failed of execution, in the article which was most easily performed. Bourbon refused to acknowledge Henry as king of France. His enterprise, however, against Provence, still took place; but after an ineffectual attempt on Marseilles, he was obliged to lead his forces, weakened, baffled, and disheartened, into Italy.

Francis might now have enjoyed, in safety, the glory of repulsing all his enemies; but ardent for the conquest of Milan, he passed the Alps, and laid siege to Pavia, a town of considerable strength, and defended by Leyva, one

A. D. 1525. of the bravest officers in the Spanish service. Every attempt which the French king made to gain this important place, proved

proved fruitless. Fatigue and unfavourable weather had wasted the French army, when Francis was informed of the approach of the imperial army commanded by Bourbon, Pescara, and Lannoy. These leaders, after cannonading the French camp for several days, at last made a general assault, and broke into the intrenchments. Francis's forces were put to the rout; and he himself, surrounded by his enemies, after fighting with heroic valour, and killing seven men with his own hand, was at last obliged to surrender himself prisoner. Almost the whole army, full of nobility and brave officers, either perished by the sword, or were drowned in the river. The few who escaped with their lives, fell into the hands of the enemy.

Henry, startled at this important event, became sensible of his own danger, from the loss of a proper counterpoise to the power of Charles. Instead of taking advantage, therefore, of the distressed condition of Francis, he was determined to lend him assistance in his present calamities; and, as the glory of generosity in raising a fallen enemy concurred with his political interest, he hesitated the less in embracing these new measures, though he proceeded with caution in avowing himself.

So careful was he to save appearances in the change, that he caused rejoicings to be every where made, on account of the victory of Pavia and the captivity of Francis. He publicly dismissed a French envoy, whom he had formerly allowed, notwithstanding the war, to reside at London; but upon the regent of France's submissive applications to him, he again opened a correspondence with her, and, besides assuring her

her of his friendship and protection, he exacted a promise that she never would consent to the dismembering of any province from the monarchy for her son's ransom. With the emperor, however, he put on the appearance of vigour and enterprise; and, in order to have a pretence for breaking with him, he dispatched Tonstal, bishop of London, to Madrid, with proposals for a powerful invasion of France. He required that Charles should immediately enter Guienne at the head of a great army, in order to put him in possession of that province; and he demanded the payment of large sums of money, which that prince had borrowed from him in his last visit at London. He knew that the emperor was in no condition of fulfilling either of these demands; and Tonstal, likewise, after his arrival at Madrid, informed his master that Charles, on his part, urged several complaints against England.

END OF VOL. XIX.

OR VOL. X. OF THE MODERN PART.

T. Gillet, Salisbury-square.